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OXFORD FROM WITHIN

THE TURL

OXFORD
FROM WITHIN

BY HUGH DE SÉLINCOURT

ILLUSTRATED BY YOSHIO MARKINO

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OXFORD FROM WITHIN

CHAPTER THE FIRST

§ 1.

ONE evening an elderly conscientious writer sat in a little room at the top of a narrow house, when two stairs at a time feet thundered up his staircase; the door was rapped loudly, and, being violently opened, was violently shut by a tempestuous intruder. The writer put his hands over the topmost sheet of papers which lay on his desk in a neat heap; for not only was he conscientious, he was also modest. If in consequence of his heart's purity, his strength was as the strength of ten, the intruder's strength was as the strength of twelve, for the hands were swiftly lifted and the topmost sheet disclosed its secret. Thereon was neatly written "Oxford," and under "Oxford" was neatly written the four-lettered English equivalent of Hades.

"A book-full more words remain to be added," said the industrious writer.

"O compiler of books, why add them?"

"The word describes feelings roused by incompetence."

"It better describes the place."

"Alma mater, home of lost causes, whispering the last enchantments of the Middle Ages." The industrious writer dreamed.

"A stagnant marsh of useless knowledge, withdrawn from the flowing river of life; where young men learn to be prigs and are inoculated with the poison of respectability: where the Medusa head of tradition is polished to slay the sons of Progress. Kindly mother of curates and schoolmasters and dons: a step-mother to poets. A place of sloth and superiority: a trap baited by the beauty of old buildings: a prop for institutions which are moribund and spread the odour of decay throughout the life of the country." The violent intruder shouted. A sad grave eye was fixed upon him. That was his only answer. Accordingly he continued:

"It is supposed to be the home of learning, but the learning is of such an order that the rich and the athletic are alone respected. Taste for the right thing in waistcoats or caps is cultivated more surely than a taste for the right thing

in science or literature or art. It has no proper values, and having no proper values, it may teach young men how to become pedants or cricketers, but it cannot teach them how to live."

"You are speaking," said the industrious writer, "against youth and against learning; not so much against Oxford as the people who live in Oxford."

"The two are inseparable," fumed the intruder.

"Would you annihilate the place?" his friend mildly persisted, "or would you slaughter all young men—another and a vaster massacre of the innocents—and destroy learning root and branch out of the land?"

So they tussled it out. Two such people often inhabit one and the same man.

§ 2.

Many a colt thinks he can get on much faster without the cart which he has been bred to draw dragging behind him, and many a young man kicks against the wisdom and tradition of the past in his anxiety to further the progress of humanity. Speed and spirit are qualities of both; but the old cart, but humanity, must follow the road, however winding, and the colt's hide must be hardened to harness, his speed be

tempered by obedience, and his spirit must by reverence be strengthened. The future is an inevitable blending of the present and the past.

Oxford is now the symbol of the past, and now more than ever is that symbol of value, because the present is more universally alive than at any other period in the history of the nation—the great Elizabethan years not excepted. Space is being conquered and the material possibilities of a man's life widened almost beyond recognition. And all these things are toys with which the children are too busy: at best they are conveniences and helps to the main business of life, which is not pleasure and not excitement. That main business has not much changed during the centuries; the essential needs of human nature—reverence, love, and joy—have not changed. The modern house is better lighted, is cleaner, and is more easily and more safely left; but the man who lives in it, is he more susceptible to beauty, is he honester in love, is he more sensitive to kindness, and is he gentler and wiser than the man who drove to Oxford in the Tantivy, or the poor scholar who trudged on foot with a special licence in his pocket permitting him to beg for his food?

"Now then, solemnity!" the intruder shouted;

"head your paragraph 'Thoughts in a Great Western Third-Smoker on approaching Oxford': you have high authority for your heading's length."

The shout indeed came in the nick of time and prevented the industrious writer from leaning forward to shake the hand of a massive clergyman who sat opposite to him, so impatient had he become of modern cleverness.

He looked at the occupants of the carriage, and found them typical. That they were all seven of them bound for Oxford he knew from the ticket examination at Paddington. There was a pale youth in glasses who assiduously read *Great Thoughts:* there was the massive clergyman who dozed and smoked in the intervals of reading a paper-bound copy of Harnack: he thought he'd just see what the fellow had to say for himself: certainly not enough to warrant the stir they made about him, his opinion seemed to be, as he placidly smoked; and that his day at any rate was safe from Disestablishment was perhaps that opinion's corollary, as he placidly dozed. There was a mild-looking lady who nursed a leather bag, and might have been the wife or sister of an eager-faced little man, her neighbour. He read the *Athenæum* and *Notes and Queries*

with a kind of fidgetty voracity: he kept pinching his pince-nez more securely on the sharp bridge of his nose, from which they were in danger of falling every time he shook with silent mirth. His little outbursts were most surprising—unseemly the very solemn and plump-faced man evidently considered, for he looked over the top of his *Punch* with unmistakable reproof on his staid features at each recurrence of the mirth. There were two young men engaged in colouring straight-grained briar pipes and discussing their friends.

The seven prepared to leave the carriage, and our friend looked out on the river and the bold hoardings of drapers and the spires of the town rising above and beyond the odd medley of little houses; he saw the reservoir and caught a glimpse of the burial-ground. Then the train stopped in the station, and he got out. The immense letters of its magical name stared at him with a dull stare of mockery. He immediately walked to the top of the platform, glad to be rid of the familiar noise and bustle; and, waiting for the local train that was to take him a few stations further, he wondered where the enchanted spirit of the place was now hidden, and how he could track it to its source. It pleased him to think that he was going to

Burford: he looked forward to the five miles drive from Shipton. Charlbury, Ascot-under-Wychwood, Stow-on-the-Wold. . . . What names! Their charm was powerful enough to silence any intruder.

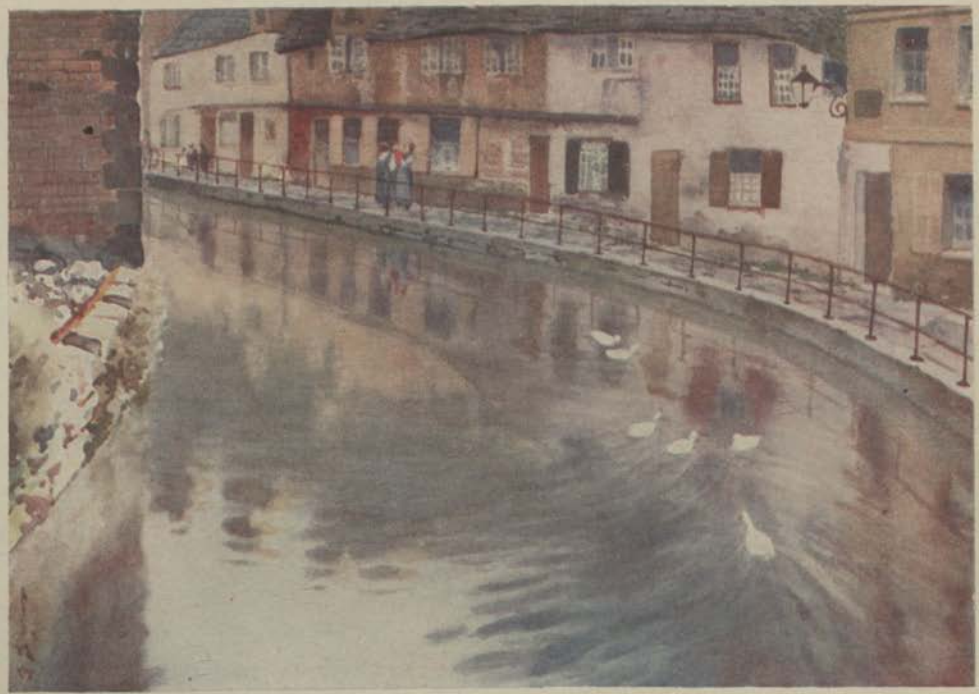
§ 3.

The road to Burford winds from the station into and through the straggling town of Shipton, and then straight up the long hill which grows steeper towards its summit and leads to a sloping plateau. From this plateau the hills curve on all sides in beautiful long lines to the horizon, and the lines are pricked out by fir-trees in thin single file or in stalwart little clumps. Once it was part of a vast deer-forest, which belonged to the King; the stags gave way to highwaymen in its adventurous history, and now its large peace is broken only by the occasional rush of a motor-car and by the larks, which sing madly in the springtime. Then the road sinks swiftly again with a sharp twist into the village of Fulbrook, and with a curve into the green meadows, through which the Windrush flows, and up from which rises steeply the old town of Burford.

"Ha!" shouted the intruder, waking from

his sleep, "the farther you leave Oxford behind you, the nearer you think you are getting to its elusive spirit, whatever on God's earth that may be." But the infernal glee, which sounded in his voice, was forced. "You wait a bit, my loud young friend," was the only answer vouchsafed him.

Burford leans bravely up the steep hill-side, recalling the past in all its old stone houses, as snow in sheltered places recalls the winter that has lately gone. It is a survival, beautiful in its grey stones, and a little deplorable in its poverty. In spite of the civic rights, of which the townsmen are still proud, the town has a plaintive air of being on show, and of living, like a poor old coquette, upon the glories of past days. For at Burford William of Malmesbury records that a synod was held in 705, at which Ina, King of Wessex, commissioned his kinsman Aldhelm, the abbot, to write a book on the Roman observance of Easter: here Cuthred rebelled against the cruelty of King Ethelbald and beat him in a great battle: Queen Elizabeth, hunting in Wychwood Forest, visited Burford, and King Charles on his way to Oxford: William of Orange on his way to London stayed at the little town in 1688, and the townsmen gave him two saddles, because at that time Burford



LITTLE VENICE

saddles were famous throughout England. Then there was life in Burford—there was even a corporation. Cuthred's fight survives only in the name of a field called Battle Edge. And now the mace and the seals are in the keeping of the doctor, the son of the last Alderman or Mayor, Mr. Thomas Cheatle, and nothing remains of the past life but its shell and the beautiful church of St. John the Baptist. The old houses seem peopled chiefly by memories.

As he walked up the wide, steep main-street and his eyes lingered on each strange doorway, each mullioned window, each gabled house, be very sure the intruder was loud upon him, counting the number of inns and publics, pointing out the dullness of the faces, the rudeness of the children, the dreary stagnation of the inhabitants.

"When you are tired," the intruder cried, "and beaten, come here to sleep and die: vitality is the only value."

Our friend climbed the hill more swiftly. As he reached the top and the little old town lay beneath him, the sky put on the panoply of evening, and the celebration of night's approach slowly began. The beauty deepened, as the rite proceeded. The whole heritage of the long past faded into the majesty of the present moments;

all questions, all problems were silenced, dumb as the intruder's voice, in reverence. Man's little doings mattered little before the great business of the sunset; but man's handiwork here at any rate was in harmony with the beauty of the hills and the sky.

§ 4.

So he hesitated round Oxford, as a man hesitates before an important decision, and hovers round the outskirts of a deliberate plan. For there the intruder clamours as an intruder; he has not yet been made at home. But our friend did very wisely. The intruder once admitted must be soothed, and being soothed becomes an agreeable companion. Irresponsibility is natural to him, and it must be admitted that the industrious writer needs at times to be clapped irreverently on the back and startled from his conscientious treading of the beaten track. The slap may even send him stumbling desperately upon a good thing.

Also, in spite of the intruder's sneers at our friend's pleasant notion that the beauty of a simple old place like Burford might lead to the possibility of his better understanding a complex old place like Oxford, our friend's following of his instinct was unexpectedly rewarded. For

on his re-entry into The Bull, where he had very properly chosen to stay, he ran into a young man whom he knew. Now this young man was of singular interest to one engaged, as our friend was engaged, in a study of Oxford; for he afforded an engagingly exaggerated instance of a not uncommon effect which a four years' sojourn at Oxford occasions. In consequence, our friend welcomed the meeting with enthusiasm, raised not so much by the young man's actual personality as by the impression which Oxford had stamped upon his personality and which was discernible everywhere about him. That impression went deeper in this case than his manner, though he spoke fluently and more kindly than was quite necessary, and it went deeper than his raiment, though he was clad in a shaggy old tweed coat and grey flannel trousers. The rumour proved true that he had taken with some friends an old house at Burford, in which they endeavoured to prolong, in surroundings as similar as possible, the old life at Oxford. As they crossed the bridge over the Windrush (his house was in the valley) the young man said: "No self-respecting person could go and sit in an office after living among the last enchantments of the Middle Ages."

It was an unhappy remark and set the intruder

shouting. He was allowed to shout. The industrious writer was too interested to pay attention to the clamour.

He found that the house and its situation were alike beautiful. It lay in the dreaming valley of the Windrush; a little tributary from the Windrush raced singing under the back windows, and cut the house sharply off from an orchard. From the front windows you looked on to the Priory woods sloping in a feathery line along the valley. He was shown over the house, that was in a state of disorder. One small room had been made into a little chapel, in which incense had been lately burned. He was not informed how often the chapel was used for service, but it became clear during the course of the evening that it was not used sufficiently often or sufficiently well to allay a certain peevishness which seemed the dominant note of the household. Everything, including the time and the world, was out of joint for these young Hamlets. Their life was like an eternal coffee-party in rooms at college. The only change was for all to move on one place, as in the classic mad tea-party. But there was no Dormouse to put in the teapot; or were they all dormice, and was it the energy of the Hare and the Hatter that was wanting?

But suddenly our friend grew serious, and remembered, and understood. His first impression had been correct. The charm of Oxford and of their life at Oxford had bitten in to them so deeply that they had decided it was the only life possible for them. He remembered his own anguish at leaving the place, which had lasted on for many months and still returned at intervals, and the memory of his anguish roused keen sympathy in him. There seemed so much that was brave and good in their effort, though the result after three years was a lamentable failure. But without dons and without vacations. . . . He could not however silence the chuckles of the intruder, who needed no convincing as to the baneful effect of Oxford. "Look," he persisted in sneering, "at the result of four years' education in that place. What kind of life are they living, with their little toy of a Church and their quaint little poses and their finicking little volumes of verse?"

What is education? our earnest friend asked himself. Certainly to him it had very little to do with enabling a boy to earn a living as quickly as possible. Round and round he went, until he clutched at a generalisation and stopped at the unsatisfying answer: To develop the best in a man. From isolated instances, at any rate,

little could be deducted. Still, his visit was exceedingly interesting. Only matrimony or an earthquake seemed forces sufficiently potent to release the young men from the muddle into which they had allowed their lives to sink; or perhaps a very high flood. . . . Anyhow their devotion to Oxford was mistaken. They had missed the meaning of the kind mother's lesson, and their error caused our conscientious friend to desire more acutely than ever to know quite precisely what that lesson did definitely mean. For the intruder's shouts only served to strengthen his conviction that she had a lesson, a fine and a beautiful lesson.

And that night among his dreams was one in which a young man stopped to look at the sun shining on a rose-bush and by so doing missed his train and the post he was after; and in his dream a mad intruder shouted that Oxford and the rose-bush should be destroyed. The memory of the wonderful place smiled upon him.

§ 5.

All next day he hovered at Burford in preparation, very like, as it seemed to him, some acolyte preparing himself for a priestly ceremony, in which a holier holy was to be revealed.

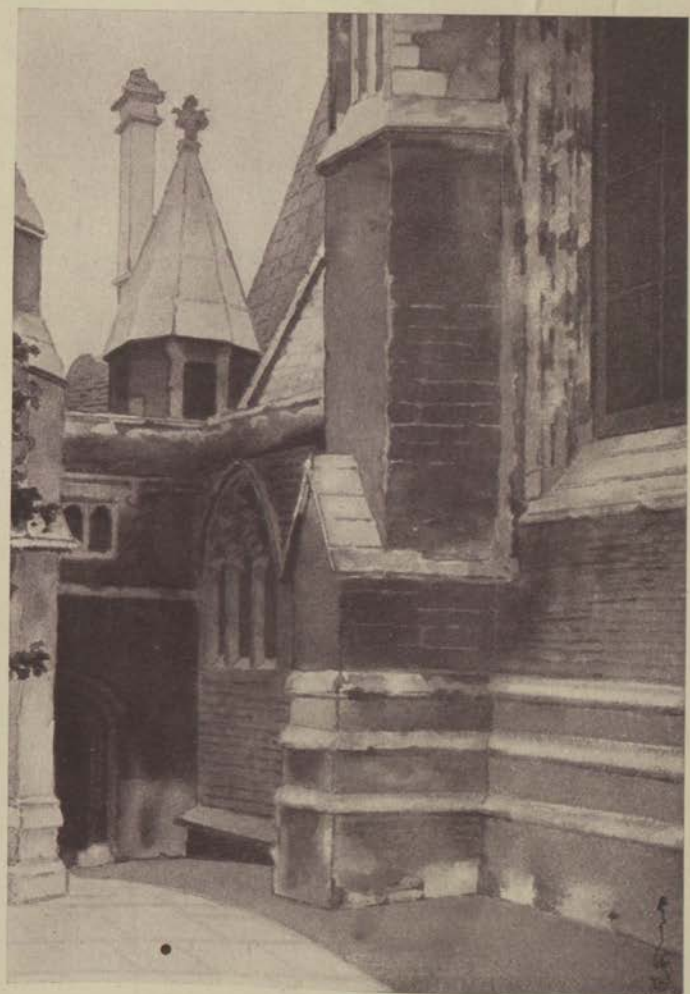
The intruder had it that a man could hypnotise himself into any belief or vision, and scouted the notion that preparation cleared the mind from the dust of trivialities, and induced reverence which helped the imagination to approach the mystery of tradition.

Our friend however read with assiduity the history of Oxford, and learned how the buildings slowly gathered and developed from hostelries to halls and from halls to colleges: how the real beginning of the *Studium Generale* at Oxford is due to a settlement therein of a body of Masters and scholars in or about 1167, in consequence of an exodus from Paris, caused by the royal edicts, and the consequent failure of free access to the great centre of European education. He sent his mind far back into the Middle Ages, when the Senate was held in the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, and tried to picture the dirty little medieval town, with no High Street and no great buildings, in which the scholars, mostly in their early 'teens, banded themselves together in houses to escape the anger of the townspeople, and the professors united to exclude from their number the charlatan or the incompetent; the scholar struggling to become a body corporate to learn, the professor a body corporate to teach. Before his

eyes rose the vision of Chaucer's Clerke, the ideal scholar of that or any age, with his hollow, sober face and his threadbare cloak; who preferred to have "twenty bookes clad in blak or read" at his bed's head than rich robes or gay sautrie; who studied alchemy but yet had little gold in his coffer; who spent all the money he got from friends on books and learning; who prayed busily for the souls of his benefactors; who spoke not a word more than was necessary;

> "And that was sayd in forme and reverence
> And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence;
> Sowynge in moral virtue was his speche
> And gladly woulde he lerne and gladly teche."

Old Chaucer's picture of the unworldly scholar came before our friend with such distinctness that his imagination was tinder to the great conception of Walter de Merton and caught fire with enthusiasm at its evolution. For it was Walter de Merton who in the thirteenth century gave a shape to the groping of the scholars and teachers towards union, and by so doing laid the foundation-stone of University life. Merton was anxious to secure for the secular priesthood the academic advantages which were almost the monopoly of the religious orders. Merton's idea was based on the life in a monastery; but whereas the monk's time was



MERTON CHAPEL

mapped carefully out with ceremonial duties and religious obligations, or, as in some cases, with work at a handicraft, the time of his scholars was to be left free for the pursuit of learning. It excited our friend—the idea of these men set apart quietly from the turmoil of the dark Middle Ages to further the knowledge of mankind. They enjoyed all the advantages of a monastery, its seclusion, its corporate life, and were hindered by no monastic limitations. They seemed to stand in our friend's fancy in a brave position, unhampered by the world or the Church, neither in the place of the fighter nor in the haven of the peaceful man. Their fight was to conquer ignorance. Their quest was in search of knowledge. They were pioneers.

And our friend watched, as he read, the actual buildings rise and learned how William of Wykeham found at last the perfect architectural expression for Merton's collegiate idea—the quadrangle, without which a college now is inconceivable. William of Wykeham's site for his New College was made difficult to handle by the line of the city wall; but over the initial difficulties he—another good pioneer—so skilfully triumphed that all later founders were glad to follow his magnificent example.

§ 6.

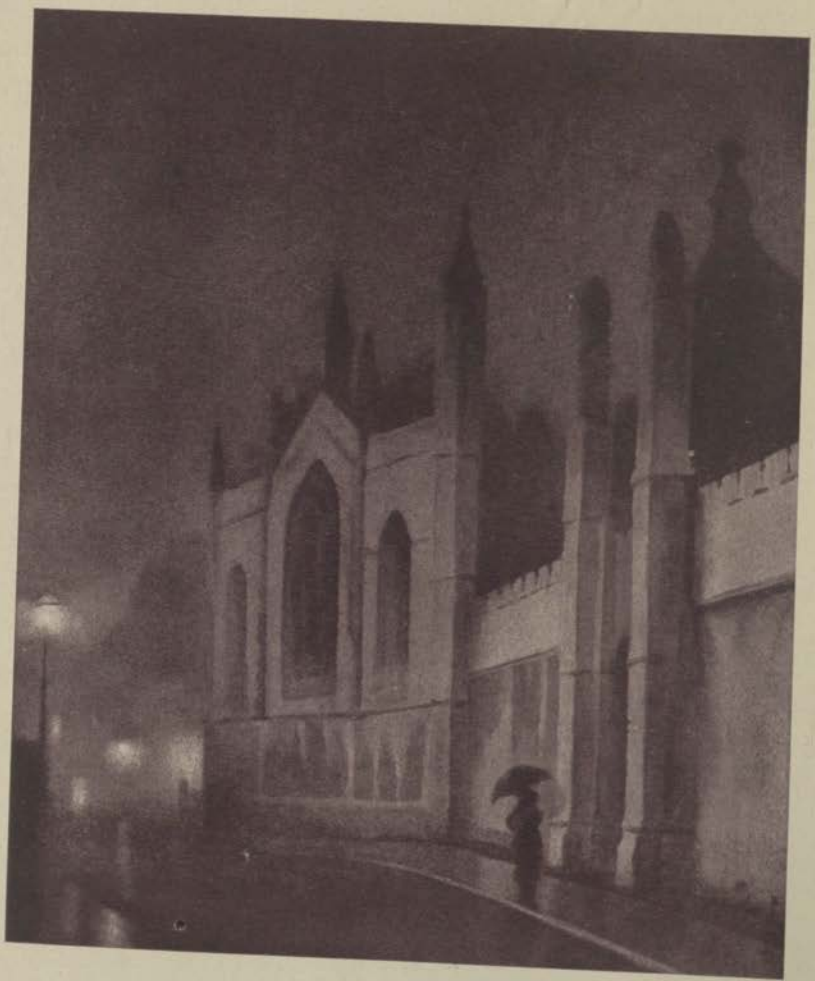
For benefactors continued to appear, who wished to put the good of learning within reach of the people of their district, or, like Walter de Merton, of their persuasions. Merton moved his Domus Scolarium de Merton from his estate in Maldon, Surrey, to Oxford about the year 1265, and from that time the University, as we know it, properly dates. University College, in spite of the attractive myth, later corroborated by a forgery, that King Alfred was the founder, began its real life about the same time. Then Balliol struggled into existence, and its birth was so prolonged that Balliol men claim precedence in antiquity; and it must be confessed that our friend more heartily than ever before cursed his undergraduate laziness which robbed him of the pleasure of pointing out to certain Balliol friends the unwilling origin of their college. For John de Balliol, the Lord of Barnard Castle, was a truculent fellow, who fell foul of the Bishop of Durham. The Bishop imposed a stern penance, that the Lord of Barnard Castle should be scourged at the door of Durham Abbey, and that he should provide perpetual maintenance for some poor scholars at Oxford. To the scourging he submitted

with a good grace, but to the latter part of the penance he seems to have taken, oddly enough, far less graciously. Six years elapsed before he could bring himself to establish a few scholars in Oxford, and then he subscribed only eightpence towards their united upkeep. However, on his deathbed (three years later) he begged his wife, the Lady Dervorguilla of Galloway, to attend more piously for his soul's sake to the business. But again there was an unaccountable delay, until the lady's conscience and her Franciscan confessor, Richard of Slickbury, moved her to fulfil this painfullest part of the Bishop's penance. Then at length, about 1282, she founded a society of sixteen scholars under two Proctors in three houses in Horsemonger Street, now called the Broad.

Walter de Stapeldon, who was made Bishop of Exeter in 1307, provided residence at Oxford for twelve scholars, who lived at Stapeldon Hall, afterwards called Exeter College. Adam de Brome received letters patent from Edward II. in 1324 to found a college, but what site he chose or why it is now called Oriel nobody knows. Robert de Eglesfield, chaplain to the great Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III., obtained the royal permission in 1341 for a college which was properly named Queen's College. It was

to consist of a Provost and twelve Fellows, twelve for the twelve Apostles; and, if possible, seventy scholars were to be educated at a time, that being the supposed number of the disciples sent out into the world by Jesus Christ. The founders particularly desired that the students should be summoned to dinner "per clarionem," and a trumpet sounds to this day at that hour, in all probability to remind the students of the last trump of doom. William of Wykeham in 1396 bought land for his "College of St. Mary de Winton in Oxenforde" after he had founded his school at Winchester: in 1379 the builders began to carry out his magnificent architectural expression of Merton's collegiate idea, and in 1387, on Palm Sunday, the Warden and scholars marched ceremoniously into residence, and New College it then uncontrovertibly was.

In 1427 Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, (Oxford was within his diocese) founded Lincoln on the site of the dilapidated church of St. Mildred. In 1438 Archbishop Chichele founded "The College of all the Souls of the Faithful Departed in Oxford," with the intention of "endowing a society whose members would continuously provide the Church, the law, and the public service of the University and State with scholars trained in the higher studies



ALL SOULS

and learning." William Patten of Waynflete, whom Henry VI. had sent from Winchester with his scholars to inaugurate the King's foundation at Eton, founded the college of St. Mary Magdalen to be to his school of St. Mary the Virgin at Eton what William of Wykeham's New College was to his school at Winchester, and the foundation stone was laid on May 5, 1473. In 1509 the Bishop of Lincoln and Sir Robert Sutton endowed an inn or hostel of scholars who lived at the Brazen Nose, and Brasenose College began its corporate existence.

Then the great Revival of Learning, passing through Europe, reached Oxford ; and Richard Foxe, Bishop of Winchester, a statesman under Henry VII. and Henry VIII., spent his declining years in the foundation of a college, in which for the first time it was ordained that there should be teachers of Greek. Foxe was helped in his scheme by Hugh Oldham, and the scheme showed the influence of the Renaissance. Not only was Greek to be compulsory, but foreigners were to be welcomed and provision be made for one Fellow to spend three years in Italy or elsewhere on the Continent. Nine years later, in 1525, Cardinal Wolsey started his great college—Cardinal College, as it was first called, now known as Christ Church. The buildings

were only half finished at the fall of Wolsey from power, but his fickle master did not lose interest in the foundation; he continued the building, and when it was decided to create a bishopric at Oxford the See was established at St. Frideswide's, which had become the Chapel of Christ Church. The great bell Tom too was removed from Osney Abbey, and at nine every night it tolls one hundred and one notes (the Thurston bequest having added one to the number of King Henry's students).

In 1555 Sir Thomas Pope bought the site of Bishop Hatfield's Benedictine college of Durham, and being an Oxfordshire yeoman he endowed his Trinity College with special advantages for Oxfordshire men; and St. John's College was founded by Sir Thomas White, a famous Lord Mayor of London, in the same year. Elizabeth gave Dr. Hugh Price permission to establish Jesus College for a Principal, eight Fellows and eight scholars, and it became the national college for men of Wales. In 1613 Nicolas Wadham and Dorothy his wife founded their college, and Broadgates Hall, changing its name to Pembroke College, was inaugurated in 1624, at which ceremony *Studiosus non Graduatus Commensalis Collegii*, Sir Thomas Browne delivered an oration on the text *Lateportensis*

Pembrochiensis et vice versa Pembrochiensis Lateportensis.

So the great University gathered and grew. Worcester followed in 1714, Hertford in 1723, and all the old Halls became incorporated into colleges, except St. Edmund's Hall. And still colleges were being founded. Mansfield College rose in rivalry to Keble; Ruskin Hall. . . .

§ 7.

Our friend was brought up from his dreamy reconstruction of the past—sharply at the present. He pushed the big book away and leant back in his chair. What would Walter de Merton, or Walter de Stapeldon, or William of Wykeham or any of the other pious founders say if they saw Oxford now? The thing had grown to such tremendous proportions! An idea came from a man, like a seed from a tree, took root, became a two-leafed weed, a sprig, a sapling, until at last a gigantic oak-tree looked up at the sun. All the populous provincial towns had their own Universities flourishing—Manchester, Liverpool, London, Cardiff, Durham, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh. What had been looked upon as a luxury, and its gift as a kindness, was now regarded as a necessity,

and its gift was an obligation that must be within the reach of all men. And of all women too. Our friend sat up again with a start, as though he were himself a pious founder of the Middle Ages, and remembered that twenty-five years ago the education of women was treated, being new, with the same kind of resentment and derision as their claim for suffrage was being treated at the present moment. And there at Oxford awaited him the visible beginnings of a nation's struggle towards enlightenment.

His mind leapt back to the ancient civilisations of Egypt, of Greece, of Rome. The moral conditions of life seemed to him to have changed so amazingly little, while physical conditions of life had changed so amazingly much. The world was fuller and more accessible. Steam and electricity linked it all up, and changed the nature of every political problem by the swift transmission of news. And yet of the world within a man, of his soul —what greater wisdom had the centuries taught humanity? There the problem remained identically the same as it had always been, and one for which life demanded from every man born into the world his personal answer. And then he paused. He seemed to see a glimmering line of difference between ancient and modern times.

He seemed to see that, whereas the ancient civilisation tended towards the cultivation of exquisite individuals, the tendency of modern civilisation was to awaken the whole nation to the responsibility of life.

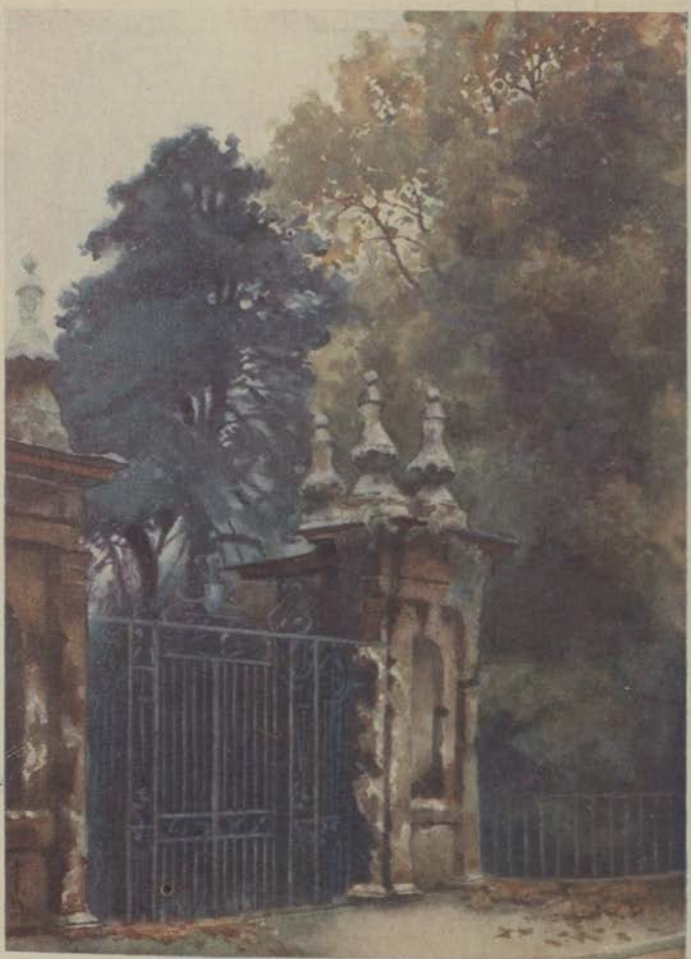
§ 8.

Fortunately at this point in his meditations our friend was interrupted by the intruder, who began to clamour that the place had always been a clerical nest; first the Monks and then the Anglican Bishops pulled back into their dreary line the searcher after knowledge, or, if like Wyclif he were disobedient, burnt him. The intruder, as his manner was, shouted and was silent. But our friend could not dismiss the point so simply. He saw in this history of Oxford, which had been engrossing him, the symbol of the nation's struggle towards freedom. Slow the movement was and tortuous, but advancing. Learning and religion must always be indissolubly connected, and the very inevitability of the connection was the chief factor in setting them continually at odds. But Oxford had never been aloof from the life of the nation. On the contrary, in the case of Wyclif, and later of Wesley, and later still of

Newman, Oxford had roused a wave of influence which spread over England.

Wyclif appealed strongly to our friend. He liked the idea of the King of England submitting the Pope's edicts to the first scholar in his realm, and the scholar's brave answer that money could be levied justly by the Pope only for his actual needs, and that no Christian was bound to maintain his worldly luxuries.

"An exception!" the intruder started up to exclaim. "It's only for some thirty years (and after a tremendous struggle) that a dissenter from the Thirty-Nine Articles was recognised as a member of the University. And now—precisely now, what are those dull, detrimental fellows doing, now that distress and destitution are looked upon not as providing outlet for the sentimental sweetness of old maids and for the fumbling good works of charity, but as a national disgrace, a mess which has got to be cleared up in as businesslike a manner as possible—do they not purse their lips to cry 'Socialism'? and behave as if the foundations of their religion and their society were being attacked? What use are their brains at the present juncture? They are now and always have been a negligible quantity. Their stomachs are too soft and weak



TRINITY GATE

to let them digest a new idea without belching and contortion."

These angry words made our friend feel uncomfortable. He disliked to have his dreams brought in this rude way to a practical, abrupt issue. The thing went far deeper. This argument to the second could not be fairly used about an institution with the age of centuries. Like many bad aguments, it was unanswerable. But our industrious friend had in his mind a vague thought, as elusive as the smell of a primrose, that there were questions of greater importance than the immediate solution of the Poor Law, and that Oxford stood for something bigger than any social problem. And the opinion, too vague and incomprehensible to be definitely expressed, remained with him in spite of the intruder's taunts that many delicate reasons are to be found for laziness.

§ 9.

He sighed deeply, from a kind of mental repletion, and opened another book, being anxious, late as it already was, to discover, before his acolyte's day of preparation came to its inevitable end, how the scholars lived through all the different centuries. He wanted

to bridge, if possible, the gulf that seemed to yawn between the Clerke of Oxenforde and the Blood of his own day. And at last anecdotes that he read in the cheerful book stood out like stepping-stones in a ford and showed a possible path to his imagination, though, when he tried to picture the background of the clerk's life, the thin clear figure quickly relapsed into uproarious, medieval darkness. The scholar emerged, however, into the light in Tudor times, and our friend found that he could don the dress and be present at Elizabeth's first royal visit without too fierce a stretch. He was among the lads who on their knees shouted *Vivat Regina*, as she entered the town: he noticed the politic snubs she gave to the dons who were too Puritan or too Roman in their proclivities: he watched her talking with the undergraduates and repaying with a smile or a tip a pretty compliment. When she was indisposed at her lodgings she sent for young Peter Carew and made him recite a Latin speech, with which she was so pleased that she called in Secretary Cecil and bade the boy repeat it. "I pray God," she said, to encourage him, "I pray God, my fine boy, thou mayst say it so well as thou didst to me just before." And this Peter Carew did and immediately rushed

away to tell his tutor of his triumph. The spirit of the life became clear as he read of the Queen's visit, for Elizabeth seemed more than ever to be the very epitome of her time. He filled in the picture with Thomas Lever, the Preacher's, more staid account: "From 5 to 6 a.m., there was common prayer with an exhortation of God's word in a common chapel, and from 6 to 10 either private study or common lectures. At 10 o'clock generally came dinner, most being content with a penny piece of beef amongst four. After this slender dinner the youths were either teaching or learning until 5 p.m., when they have a supper not much better than their dinner. Immediately after they went either to reasoning in problems or unto some other study until 9 or 10 of the clock, and then being without fire were fain to walk or run up and down half an hour to get a heat on their feet before they went to bed." It became clear from these two accounts how the scholars managed "to join learning with comely exercises as Castiglione in his book The Courtier doth trimly teach."

§ 10.

It became less difficult for our friend to realise that all through the Stuart period the scholars were frequently and severely birched; privately or before their college or even before the whole University in accordance with the seriousness of their misdemeanour. Frequenting inns and taverns, omitting to cap or to give the wall to a don, breaking a friend's mortar-board, or smoking the Nicotine weed known as tobacco, were some offences among innumerable others punishable with the rod: and the orders regulating its infliction, he smiled to think, were probably still on the statute book, though their strict enforcement was unlikely to be further insisted upon. He wondered whether the young undergraduates were still caned during the martial rule of the siege, when they loyally enrolled themselves to fight and drink for their King. Civil War suddenly seemed to assume a vivid aspect as he noted the dates October 29, 1642, and June 24, 1646, between which the King and his Court were at Oxford, and he wondered whether the legend that war was the finest rouser of a nation's spirit held good for the nation in whose country the war was being carried on, and shuddered at the

popular sentimental little imitations, miscalled patriotism, of that ghastly reality. Whatever most successfully blunted the finer instincts of humanity was certainly the most satisfactory training for a modern campaign in which calculation was of more use than courage.

From the experience of poor Nic. Amhurst our friend gained insight into the manners of early Georgian Oxford. Nicholas was too unruly a fellow to be allowed to reside at St. John's College by Dr. Delaune. He was accordingly sent down and, being sent down, betook himself to London and produced, in imitation of the *Spectator*, fifty numbers of a pamphlet *Terræ-Filius* in which he poured out his contempt against Oxford and the dons and Dr. Delaune. In one number he addressed "all gentlemen-schoolboys in His Majesty's dominions who are designed for the University of Oxford." He continues, "I observe in the first place that you no sooner shake off the authority of the birch, but you affect to distinguish yourselves from your dirty schoolfellows by a new suit of drugget, a pair of prim ruffles, a new bob-wig and a brazen-hilted sword. . . . After you have swaggered about town for some time, and taken your leave of all your old aunts and acquaintance, you set

out in the stage-coach to Oxford, with recommendatory letters in your pockets to somebody or other in the college where you are to be admitted, who introduces you as soon as you get there, amongst a parcel of honest-merry fellows, who think themselves obliged in point of honour and common civility to make you drunk, and carry you, as they call it, a corpse to bed."

Still, it seemed that manners had improved. He remembered Antony Wood's account of his inauguration a hundred years before, when with other freshmen he was made to stand up on a form in hall and say some humour or witty speech, and if this met with the approval of the elder men he was given hot sack to drink, but if with their disapproval, cold salted water. As he turned back to the speech which earned for Antony his cup of hot sack, and which in consequence he proudly relates in full, our friend's thoughts wandered on to his own freshman days and to his own Freshman's Wine, dwelling, a little mournfully it must be owned, upon the disastrous effects of Claret and Burgundy, judiciously mixed, upon a young head. "Blades," "Smarts," "Bloods"; the name was after all the chief difference between them; every college would always harbour, he smiled

to hope, its "Best Man" and its "Push," and there would always be the Nicholas Amhurst type who, excluded from its society, would be righteously indignant against its very obvious and very pardonable faults,—*pro bono publico* and for the relief of his feelings. The satirical letter written by Amhurst in the character of a "Smart" to *Terræ-Filius* seemed extremely pat to this frame of mind. "Amongst all the vile trash and ribaldry with which you have lately poisoned the public, nothing is more scandalous and saucy than your charging our university with the want of civility and good manners. Let me tell you, sir, for all your haste we have as well-bred accomplished gentlemen in Oxford as anywhere in Christendom; men that dress as well, sing as well, dance as well, and behave in every respect as well, though I say it, as any men under the sun. You are the first audacious Wit-would that ever called Oxford a boorish, uncivilised place; and, demure sir, you ought to be horsed out of all good company for an impudent priggish jackanapes. . . . . Who has handsomer tie wigs or more fashionable cloaths, or cuts a bolder bosh, than Tom Paroquet? Where can you find a handier man at a tea-table than Robin Tattle? Or, without vanity, I may say it, one that plays better at ombre

than him who subscribes himself an enemy to all such pimps as thou art." The salient point about such satire was its uselessness. For in reality those excellent "smarts" or "bloods" who incensed intelligent Nicholas Amhurst, as they have incensed many another less conspicuous personage than themselves, defy caricature by their own beautiful innocence. Our friend remembered an instance of a dear man, perfect to the last button of him, who was a rowing "blue," and who, during a conversation on the growing lack of religion among men at Oxford, remarked with cherubic seriousness, "I dunno; I don't see why people should think Oxford such a beastly atheistical place; everyone wears a bowler hat on Sundays." Such a remark would be beyond even the daring of caricature. Nature beggars every art.

§ 11.

The intruder kept an ominous silence. Life for him was far too serious an affair to allow indulgent smiles over the drunkenness and imbecility of youth. Youth for him meant ardour and hope; youth for him meant the stirring time when the foundations were being laid for manhood's achievement. But our friend

disregarded the threat of his scowl and, blessing his silence, opened another book to bring the story of Oxford life nearer to his own time. The book was written by a staunch old Conservative —coeval, as it appeared, with his grandfather— who was inclined to lament the popularity of the railway and the cessation of the coach, and who referred to the Shelley Memorial as "a beautiful shrine in memory of one whose unsavoury life demands no such triumph of design and sculpture. . . . It is indeed one of the outcomes of the damnable modern doctrine that genius is superior to the laws and customs guiding and restraining ordinary humdrum mortals who pay their taxes, settle their butcher's bills and remain faithful to their wives." The sentence struck our friend as being so funny, flatly printed in cold black ink, that he blinked and read it again, and then, turning to the intruder's pale face of anguish at such blasphemy, remarked that Oxford was at any rate in advance of somebody. This gentleman wrote of the grand old days when unpopular deans (our friend thought wistfully of one little dean, too shrewd to be unpopular) were screwed up in their rooms, when town and gown rows flourished, and it was the fashion to fight bargees: "but the present historian (I who tell you)," so wrote this engaging gentleman, "saw recently

an Oxford man accidentally hustle a bargee and say, 'I'm sorry. . . .' No Oxford man of a past age would ever have hustled a bargee accidentally: he would have done it of malice prepense and he would not have apologised. Nor would it have mattered if he did, for the occasion would anyway have demanded the tapping of claret. In this modern instance . . . not a blow was exchanged; but in those old days here recalled that scholar would have retorted with what I believe was then called 'a prop in the eye,' and there would have been much trouble. But this bargee looked as though he could, and would, have eaten any modern Oxonian and asked for more."

The poor modern Oxonian fared ill as the poor poet in the mind of the engaging old pugilist. Perhaps there was some subtle connection between flooring a bargee in one's youth and remaining faithful to one's wife and paying one's butcher's bill in years of maturity, a connection which might, if only the clue were found and followed, work out into a Mid-Victorian ideal and divulge the dark secret of the Mid-Victorian mind. Our friend, on the look out for developments and tendencies, worried at the puzzle, like a dog at a bone, but it remained for him meatless and fruitless. Only he started an un-

expected fact, which disappeared again, swiftly as a startled hare, before he could spy closely into it, that the more nearly he approached his own day the more surprising did the changes in custom appear, and the more impossible did it become for him to follow the gradual process of the change. The results only stared at him in fierce contrast. At any rate the phantom, which had sometimes been scaring, of the physical degeneracy of the race was properly and finally exposed by the pugilistic author's own bluff honesty. It was well perhaps to pause before extending to a whole race the personal wish that lies in the heart of all men: "O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos."

§ 12.

So our friend, primed with much lore, closed his books and went to bed in the old inn at Burford. He smiled to think, as he undressed, what a pity it was that he had been too lately curious. He had, with the royal arrogance of youth, accepted everything as it was. First his shyness, then his familiarity with the place, and lastly, his love of it and departure had been the stages of his progress. But in the place itself he had taken no interest: that had been strictly

confined to his own impressions, which now appeared infinitesimally trivial. His kindly appropriation of the place touched the extreme limit of absurdity, and yet he realised that he was far from being alone in his iniquity; he realised that, when he stood in the porch of his own college at one o'clock on the next day, he would provoke many a look, almost pronounced enough to be called a stare, from the group which always gathered there at that time—the group of present appropriators—and the little dean stepping hurriedly through the group, with his furtive smile of recognition. . . . Nothing at all would have changed, except perhaps the porter and the little dean, and they would be not yet noticeably older.

That porch epitomised much. There some notices were hung (notices more private to the college than lists of lectures and teams were hung elsewhere), and there the "best men" amiably lounged and decided in what rooms they would lunch. One incident stood out—blazingly illustrative. Among the "best men" was standing one—a real tennis Blue—who in dress was easily the best. The slit up the back of his coat was the perfect length, his waistcoat the perfect pattern, his socks the perfect colour, and his hair in perfect order. He spoke too with a per-

fect natural drawl that defied imitation. Now it happened to be the fashion at that time to wear a brightly-coloured handkerchief protruding from the side of your pocket, so from his pocket a handkerchief protruded to the exactly right extent. Into the porch came a shy scholar, who knew much about some things, but nothing about what was *the* thing. The perfect man, who by some strange chance knew the scholar slightly, greeted him with the exactly right wag of the head, much to the shy scholar's embarrassment, who, feeling bound to hide his shyness under a remark, glanced at the notice-board and said, "Oh, excuse me, but your handkerchief is dropping out of your pocket." The perfect man looked at him with some amazement, and seeing that the remark was inspired by serious benevolence, replied, "Thanks, most awfully," and hid that last touch in his pocket. The shy scholar disappeared round the corner; there was a shout of laughter from the group, and the handkerchief resumed its pristine droop from the pocket. The little incident seemed to throb with significance.

The intruder foamed at the memory. But then, he sympathised too keenly with the scholar's awkwardness, and was unaware how extremely kind a heart beat under the perfect

man's irreproachable waistcoat. Its benevolence certainly ought to have atoned for any slight deficiency in his mental equipment, and the intruder succumbed a little painfully to the charge of envy, for the perfect man's affability and manner were undoubtedly enviable. Why was it, our industrious friend mildly mused as he fell asleep, that almost the last thing brains helped a man to was sociability? At first, at any rate, brains seemed to make easy intercourse with others a thing of insuperable difficulty, whereas they should act in precisely the opposite way. An odd little procession of gauche young men with brains trooped ridiculously before his departing consciousness.

He dreamed that the Vice-Chancellor lectured him at length before the assembled University upon his impertinent musings on Oxford, and not believing in his complete lack of control over the intruder (in his dream most pitifully pleaded) caned him severely, while the gowned congregation applauded.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

§ 1.

He was so weighed down, on awaking in the morning, with the high purpose of his day's journey, that the first Station omnibus, which he had resolved to catch, departed without him. He was vexed but philosophic; partly, no doubt, owing to the pleasant fact that the discovery of the hour's lateness was made in time to prevent a foolish scramble into clothes and a more foolish snatching of breakfast. He turned over and warmly dozed. Eventually he rose. He dressed in a leisurely manner, ate a proper breakfast and comfortably caught the next omnibus.

His acolyte's preparation of the previous evening seemed mythically remote as he stepped from the train on to the Oxford platform. There was no magic in the round-eyed stare of the name's lettering. It was unusual to arrive on that side of the station, and he had forgotten to notice the green, wide

sweep of Port Meadow. In fact he was just unromantically there. Still, the sun was shining and lunch would be waiting for him in two hours' time at the agreeable rooms of a man with whom he had been "up" and who had become a don. While he was leaving his bag at the Cloak Room, he smiled to remember that the pious founder preferred a second beating in a church porch to the founding of his friend's college. There was an odd consolation in the thought.

"Like Henry James arriving in New York," our friend proceeded to think, "I will realise the importance of first impressions, and be ready for them." He slowly walked down the station hill, blinking in the sunlight, and saw the huge announcement of marmalade that had grown through its excellence into an industry. The taste certainly that was most surely cultivated was this taste for marmalade, and the taste carried with it an aroma of the place. A sad horse-drawn tram jerked to a start, and stopped again to receive a bustling, slow, old woman, who seemed to have come from the country; then it jerked on again and the off-side horse gave a lazy ridiculous jump, that it mistook for a canter, and fell back into its habitual trot. And yet this was precisely the

place where the ancient abbeys of Osney and of Rewley stood: and along this very way Matilda must have escaped from the Castle with three faithful knights, wrapped in sheets for better concealment, as they passed over the deep white snow. It was no use. Romance fled before Marmalade and the Trams and the Railway Stations; and he became aware only of a pain that crept upon his stomach. It was his last discomfiture. He peered up through trees at the great mound and the prison, that was once the castle of Oxford. They told him nothing. He was in despair. He hailed a hansom-cab and was driven, his eyes shut, to the nearest entrance to the Parks. The red freshness of Keble, and the modern brightness of the Museum refreshed him a little by demanding nothing from him. He strode round the Parks and stood by the sluggish Cherwell on the look out for water-rats, until it was time to go and lunch with his friend the don—which at length he sulkily set out to do.

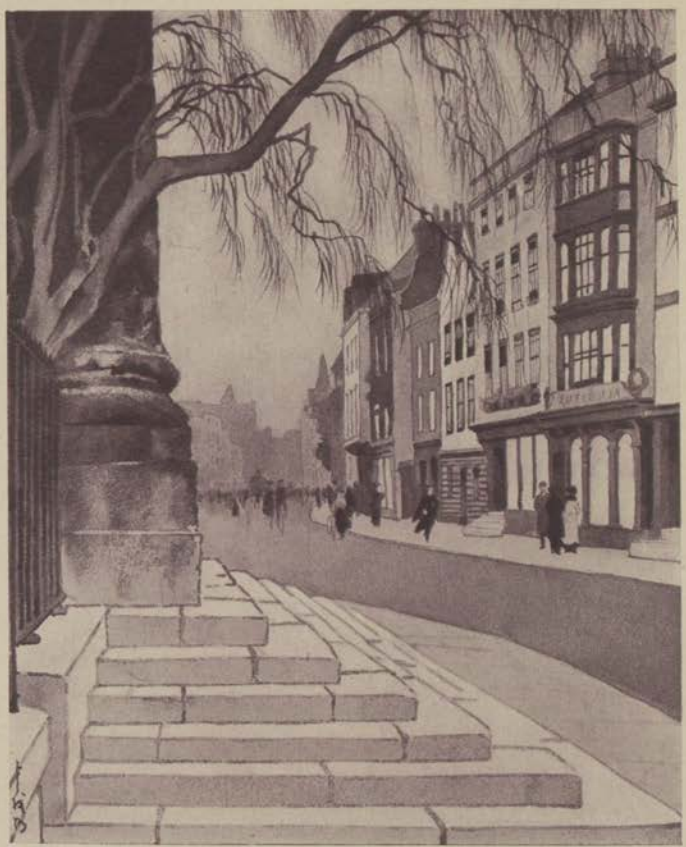
§ 2.

A surprise was in store for our friend. Very early in the course of lunch, which had been discreetly laid by an elderly scout and in

which Chester biscuits and marmalade naturally figured, the young don said "So; thou art the man": to which accusation our friend humbly replied "I am he," and waited for the charge to be more roundly stated. But there was a silence; and then in a tone of sincere emotion the young man murmured "What a chance!" and to the fragmentary, astonished "Why?" with which his murmur was received, he impressively said, "Because Oxford is the most beautiful city in the world, as it now actually is —and could be made . . ." His sentence ended in a deep sigh. Our friend sat up, startled by the shock of unexpected enthusiasm, and an unresponsive "Yes" was the only word that his lips could find to utter.

"For instance," the young don proceeded and stopped abruptly, eyeing our friend with the look of a conspirator searching for and summing up evidence of trustworthiness; and he must have found firmer ground in our friend's mind than his tentative "Well?" could have afforded, for with sudden eagerness he went on:—

"There are certain architectural excrescences which could be removed. The destructive instinct of exhilarated youth could be made to serve a good purpose. A little organisation has



IN FRONT OF THE SHELDONIAN

been formed: its members are practical and earnest, and are, moreover, sworn to secrecy."

"By me," said our friend, "you shall not be betrayed."

"Its members are sworn to secrecy. A bump supper is imminent. A hypnotist has been engaged—of accredited powers. He will be disguised as a waiter, and will suggest to the most riotously inclined spirits our plan. Our plan is nothing more and nothing less than to remove from the front of the Sheldonian Theatre those hideous, those atrocious busts which now most outrageously deform it. How will this be negotiated? you may rightly enough object. The walls are high; the walls are precipitous; they afford no foothold; ladders are unwieldy and dangerous and difficult to obtain. I answer: Everything has been foreseen. Imagine to yourself the excited crowd gathered by the cunning of the hypnotist in front of these dismal effigies, shouting that the time has come for those warts to be removed from the fair face of the city. An occasional stone is flung; when from the crowd emerges a Rhodes scholar with a weighted lasso of specially prepared, thin, silk-spun rope. The loop whirls through the air and encircles the head of Socrates; the crowd yells as it is tugged tight, and yells louder as after a

Herculean pull the monstrous thing totters and falls. Again the lasso flies on its unerring course through the air, another dreadful effigy lies shattered on the ground. The police try vainly to prevent this beautifying by destruction. The excitement grows intenser, the shouts grow louder, the scene becomes big—tremendous—Homeric. And then you know," he proceeded in quieter tones, "and then you know in the morning there is a great hubbub. Vandals at play, young Barbarians, all the usual headlines. But we come forward and inculcate judiciously into the public mind the exact nature of the blessing that has been wrought. The poor pieces are picked up and disposed of, and the University goes on its usual course but in cleaner surroundings. One sighs to think how malignant an influence those horrible busts must have worked upon young and growing minds. How many young men must have been turned away from wisdom by those staring reminders of men who have practised it !"

§ 3.

Our friend was too astounded at the young don's enthusiasm to be able to raise any objections to his fantastic scheme. He merely

meekly suggested a tour of inspection through the place in which he had lived for four years. "I'll be your tourist, if you'll be my guide," he chaunted with idiotic mournfulness. And forth they immediately sped, their throats burned by coffee, drunk in their haste too hot. To Merton, to Magdalen, to New College, along the High to the House, to University, to Worcester and to Balliol, and still he saw nothing but cold stones in various beauty of shape and setting, and still he learned nothing—except to hate the continuous sound of the young don's eager voice and to respect his knowledge and enthusiasm. It all seemed distant and apart. The closelier he peered, the farther the secret shrank away from him, as fairies are said to hide from mortals. Indeed he seemed to be under an enchanter's spell. This peering pursuit revealed nothing to him but his own insensibility to everything but the persistent call of memory. The place was too familiar, and too dear: or rather it stood for him as the symbol of too much that was dear. The intruder shouted at his sentimental regrets and his foolish fancies. Did he expect stones to be anything but stones and cold and grey? Or what did he expect of them?—well knowing, with his intruder's prescience, that to discover an answer to these questions was pre-

cisely the moment's difficulty. Our friend grew miserably tired; his legs ached and his head most vilely at the persistent flow of the young don's architectural and antiquarian lore.

"This is a mere glimpse of a bird: you must stay a month and let the thing soak into you," the young don urged.

"I'll stay a week," our friend desperately said, and crept away.

Dudgeon held him, as he made his arrangements, and having made them he sadly wandered. Down the High he wandered and stood on Magdalen Bridge. There dudgeon changed to grief, intolerable grief—at what, he did not know. It was like an acute feeling of loss, not loss of anything so definite as a friend, and vaguer even than the sense of days that cannot be recalled. For he had no wish to recall any days. He remembered everything too well to feel such loss acutely. Those days were part of his possession. But as he stood looking down into the slowly-moving water he seemed to have been taken quite out of his life, and to have lost the sense of Time. He felt the sadness of humanity's slow movement towards death, and the years of a man's life seemed very short and his doings trivial.

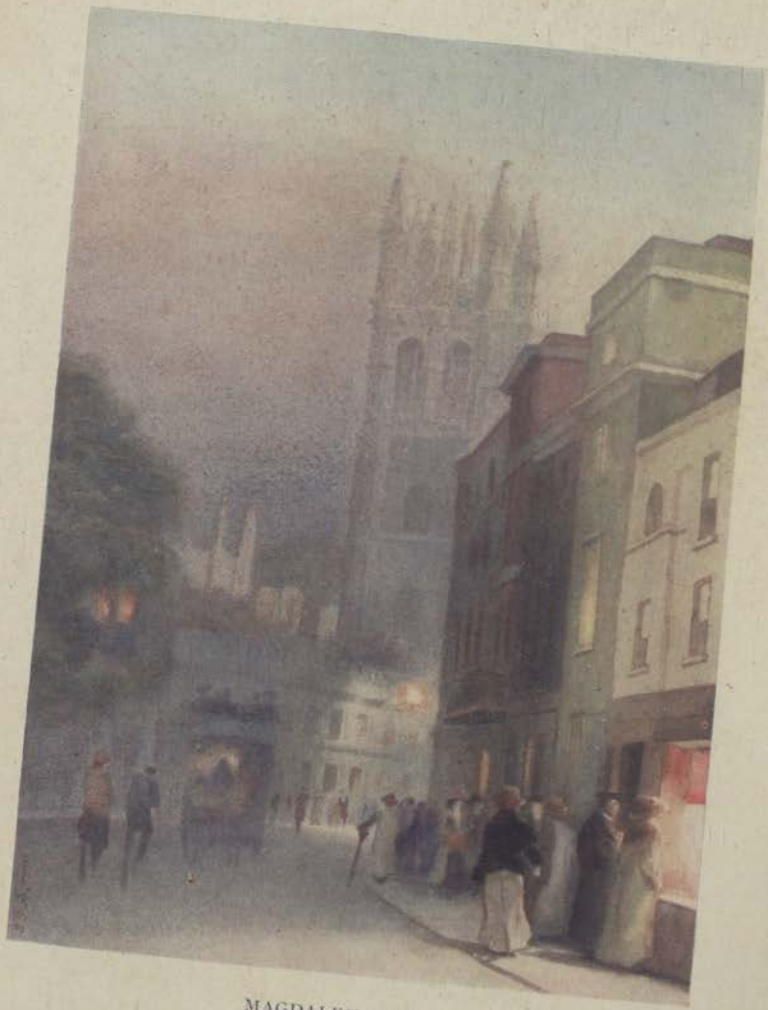
The old town standing there between rivers

among the hills began to have a meaning to him, against which no intruder clamoured.

§ 4.

Dreaming, he left the bridge and went dreaming into Magdalen, past the chapel into the old roofed Cloister Quadrangle, with its solemn arches and its pavement of great stone-slabs; and there in that epitome of the old place his attention was arrested from dreams by a gargoyle —the grotesque and almost shapeless rendering of a beast. A fact as obvious as the stones around him, a fact which like many another he had for long idly known, touched his imagination and became alive:—that the men who made all these buildings for the glory of God and of learning were as determined as any other artist to leave an expression of themselves out of their lives, a little less transitory, a little less temporary than their own human lives themselves might actually be. Naturally the intruder jeered with all his critical might at the discovery of this notable commonplace; but, commonplace and familiar as the fact indubitably was, it struck our friend so freshly hard that he brushed the intruder on one side as a silly fellow—critical sneers and all. He looked at the strange misshapen

thing and at all the other gargoyles. They seemed to grin at him from the door of the past which was now at last opening. They symbolised, he remembered reading, virtues and vices and told the story of David's conquest over the Lion and Goliath: the Lion the emblem of Courage, the Pelican the emblem of Vigilance, and the Hippopotamus carrying his young upon his shoulders, which was the true symbol of a good Tutor: there was the Dog for Flattery, the Deer for Timidity, the Lycanthropos for Violence, the Griffin for Courteousness, the Boxers for Contention and the Mantichora for Pride. To the sculptor they were no more symbols than to Leonardo his beautiful young god was St. John the Baptist or to Shakespeare his brave Elizabethans were dead Romans. It remained for the ecclesiastics to find suitable meanings and names for the life which grew in stone round their edifices; and this it must have taxed them to do when their own vices were used as ornaments to their own buildings. But the artists cared little so long as they expressed the life they saw around them, and the animals they hunted or kept for food or read of in their portentous Bestiaries. This freedom offended some, and St. Bernard wrote strongly against them. "Not that I censure



MAGDALEN TOWER

proper ornament, but only what is fantastical and superfluous. For pictures are the books of the laity or unlearned; but by pictures I mean such as portray the Passion of Christ and the sufferings of the saints." And just as modern circulating librarians have banded themselves together to suppress any expression of life in fiction which they consider might corrupt a young girl's mind, so the medieval ecclesiastics passed a resolution to limit the expression of life in stone ornament to what they considered to be proper. The analogy startled our friend to laughter, and he began to wonder whether the time would ever come when these physical values of right and wrong would seem as fantastic as the grotesques now staring stonily at him.

"Oh, never mind the weather, we'll catch cold together," sang a young clerk of Oxenford to himself, as he returned from a lecture, and disappeared up his staircase. It brought our friend up from his medieval musings with a funny, sharp bump, and made him laugh at the whole motley confusion of life which seemed in this illustrious seat of learning to be expressed with almost too daring an exaggeration of effect. He took out his notebook to record in immortal words the secret which the gargoyles had taught

him; but the page then and thereafter remained to the exquisite delight of the intruder a blank, perfect except for some casual thumb-marks. However, in spite of that, a weight was lifted from his mind, and from that moment he made his way about the old city with reverence and gaiety, delighting in all the many beautiful things which awaited his inspection.

§ 5.

The awe of the acolyte was not on account of this awakening dispersed, but deepened into a more human feeling—which the intruder by slow degrees began to share in his own rather truculent manner. For the buildings offered magnificent contrasts, varied as life itself. The threatening castle and the thick battlemented wall in the garden of New College frowned as fiercely to his imagination as the fairy turrets of Magdalen laughed gaily into the air: movement caught and expressed for ever with all the grace of the moment and all the constancy of the everlasting. Such an entrance would give a proper welcome to the man who tested a philosopher by the quality of his laugh, and from the top of a joy-trembling tower it was right that songs should be sung in honour of

the Spring, when the morning of May-day dawned. What room for wonder that such a tower should perceptibly move to the music? And along the austere curve of the High, past the august wall of Queen's, he might walk with an eye for the solemn charm of University, for its friendly gateways and all the sober beauty of its curving frontage, on to the reverent gaiety of St. Mary's. He must stop before that Porch; and see again how all the bulk of the great building was forced by the sweep of delicate compelling curves above the stone figure of the Virgin and Her Child to do her honour, how two sphinxes watched above her and how above the sphinxes stood the open book on which the great legend was written—DOMINUS ILLUMINATIO MEA.

There was no better approach to the fantastic delicacy of the low, broad staircase that led to Christ Church's enormous hall than the impressive width and size of Tom's gigantic quad. The big bell was well housed.

And always on every side the same contrasts struck him, between austereness and gaiety. It was noticeable in the buildings, in their gargoyles and their aged grandeur, in their dancing traceries and solemn bulk. It was noticeable in the inhabitants, the austere and sometimes

even painful don and the light-hearted undergraduate; and nowhere more than in the "men" themselves, between the blood and the sombre student. No one looked older than some of the fellows, no one could look younger than some of the "men," in their rakishly crumpled mortarboards and their tattered, little ridiculous gowns. Our friend was again and again reminded of a small nephew of nine, who shaking his head sadly over a school-friend of ten, called him "a bad man." They were bad men surely of the same calibre who broke every window one fine night in Tom's great quadrangle, because they were not allowed to attend a ball, at which they much wanted to be present. The exploit gave work to the glaziers and trouble to the authorities to retain against such protesters the dignity of their position. How they managed to retain that dignity so well remains a marvel until one remembers their great ally, Time, who is apt to bring the youngest rebel to their side.

But the effect of contrast, which had struck our industrious friend with the suddenness of a shock, mounted to its climax that evening. He began the evening by dining at High Table. The experts, whose names were familiar on the front page of many a textbook and many a

CHRIST CHURCH: TOM QUAD

treatise, assembled in the Senior Common Room, and having gathered, ascended in due order of seniority to the Hall, up a narrow, winding stone staircase. Dinner began. Our friend, overawed by the number of illustrious men who watched him from the panelled wall behind, was silent. Moreover, he was aware that he could broach no subject on which an expert was not present to correct him. One neighbour smiled benignantly at him and conversed (wisely) with the man on his left; the other was already in the thick of a discussion on the importance of a new text of Suetonius which had lately been published; so our friend was at liberty to observe. And as he was doing so (most reverently, because facts and details which had always eluded him seemed here to be at everybody's tongue's tip), his benignant neighbour, whose reputation was European, turned on him and asked, "Can you tell me the date of the Battle of Idris?" or some place which had previously been connected in our friend's mind hazily with a mineral water. "No, I am afraid I cannot," our friend emphatically replied; and his neighbour, waiting a few moments for a lull, called out to a man at the far end of the table, "Mr. ——, could you tell me the date of the Battle of Idris?" On which summons Mr. ——

looked round without surprise, and immediately answered pat with the year and the month and the day of the month, and having answered resumed his conversation. Our friend strangled an absurd desire to cry out, "Comé up top." The bottom in such a class was his place. The only date he knew other than the landing of William the Conqueror in 1066 was the Battle of Issus in 333, and that piece of knowledge was nullified by his uncertainty as to whether it was A.D. or B.C. If a little knowledge were a dangerous thing, how safe was all the present company! He did the best he could under the circumstances and drank deep at the nearest approach within his reach to the Pierian spring. In wine he found his immediate comfort and winked at the intruder, who awoke to remind him that in that august assembly lurked a conspirator, and pointed to the place where the hypnotist would be at work upon his fell suggestiveness. Dinner ended. They repaired with their napkins to the Common Room, where dessert awaited the company, and coffee, which was administered by the youngest fellows. There one of the four parsons present attracted our friend's notice by the fact that a small eye twinkled irresistibly in his extremely serious face, and that his voice had a gentle, slow depth

which bore no relationship to the usual intonation of a curate's voice. His whole bearing was in pleasant contrast (ah! this home of fierce contrasts) to the muscular heartiness of a Rugby football forward, who coached his college eight and preached from the pulpit bluff doctrines of muscular Christianity, which he described as being of the old school. He was far too familiar a figure in the University to seem out of place in any Common Room. The company sat in a large semicircle round the fire, and it happened that a silence fell upon them all, with the exception of a little group, which included the two contrasts in the cloth. They were discussing with such fervour the character of some man that the attention of all was idly attracted. The muscular Christian, beating his right fist on his open left palm, vociferated, "Well, I say that he is a very good chap at bottom": to which with the most delicate of smiles his serious-faced friend replied in his clear, sweet voice, "Yes, but we don't want to look at his . . ." The last word was lost in shouts of laughter from everyone. The sentence danced round the room with the seemliness of a naked imp, and the venerable place became for the ten minutes that remained before the company's disposal, to our industrious friend's astonish-

ment — a smoking-room. *Facilis descensus Averno.*

After the dispersal our friend went to the rooms of a "man" he knew, summoned by the Secretary of the Peter Pan Society. The proceedings began with gossip about the Alpine Club, a branch of which had been formed in Oxford to scale architectural heights, and continuing with an ardent explanation of what Nietzsche meant by Preachers of Death ended with a spirited performance of scenes from *The Merry Widow.*

And then our friend adjourned to his own rooms. From the window there was an extensive view of the town and of the sky. It was a night brave with stars, and very still. There was no wind; only from time to time the gentlest puff of wind, like a sigh of the sleeping earth, was perceptible. A window near was noisily opened, and let out shoutings from a cheerful party to friends leaving; then it was noisily shut. Laughter and running steps on cobble-stones sounded along the street, and all was again still, except for the busy sound of shunting trains in the distance, which seemed to prick out the stillness. Then a clock began to strike twelve, and from over all the city the many clocks, each in its own solemn tone, told the hour of mid-

night. The telling was impressive. Often before our friend had stood at his window in college and listened to the clocks striking twelve. But never before had he been so keenly aware of the moment's immense solemnity. He was aware, probably because of his acolyte's preparation, of Time and Time's progress, which should certainly be proclaimed in deep grave tones; and he was aware that there was always something affecting when the expression of a great thing was in accord with the great thing itself. Even the intruder was impressed and, turning uneasily within him, had the grace to own that there were points about Oxford.

Bravely to realise life; that was the thing. All Preachers of Death—a mighty phrase—should hear that proclamation of midnight. And there at midnight, while the townspeople and the "men" and the fellows and most of the motley society of human existence harboured within the old city were sleeping, our friend at his open window felt in the star-lit darkness near to the very heart of life itself, and was filled with elated reverence at his share in the great business. Nothing alive, not even himself, seemed paltry in the light that shone there. Nowhere had the past played its part more beautifully than in the

city on which he looked, and on which the stars were gaily twinkling. It is good when the heritage of the past is beauty—good and uplifting.

§ 6.

Often in the days when our friend was "up" and reading for his Divinity Schools (as Divvers is occasionally called), he betook himself, with his "Acts," to a particular seat in Addison's Walk, which commanded (with a crook of the neck) a view of the little weir that rushes from under a little house. There, in the bend opposite to him where the water was quiet, a water-rat lived, and at five o'clock, which was the usual time of our friend's visit, took a meal. Our friend had been brought up with extreme strictness, and had travelled with St. Paul and St. Peter in their respective journeys so many times in the nursery, in his Preparatory School and at his Public School, that no ghost of a fierce examiner rose in his mind to disturb his great pleasure in watching the water-rat. He loved water-rats for many reasons. When he was a small boy he had tried from a punt to shoot them with his elder brother's pistol, as they swam across the river, and the splash of the water had shown him exactly how far he

was from hitting them. Then, as he grew up, he read Thoreau's "Week on the Concord," and his previous attachment became romantic when he read of a water-rat "that fumbled for melons," and of water-rats that swam by the boat "with no fire to dry themselves that we knew of." This attachment grew to love when he read, as he soon did, George Meredith's poem, "The Old Chartist":

> "What is yon brown water-rat about
> Who washes his old poll with busy paws?
> What does he mean by't?
> It's like defying all our natural laws
> For him to hope that he'll get clean by't."

Nor was the attachment lessened by reading Mr. Kenneth Graham's "Wind in the Willows." Well, a dozen times he must have watched the little old fellow take his meal about the hour of five. He was an exquisite, not only in the way in which he kept his fur, but also in his choice of food and his manner of eating it. First his head appeared from under a bush on the bank, its "needle-muzzle" working, then he trotted over the dried mud by the edge of the stream and sat down on the brink. Having carefully chosen one from among the bunch of quivering reeds that grew in the stream, he dived to its root. The reed quivered and shook,

and was dragged slowly under, while its root appeared on the surface in the rat's mouth. He swam to shore, sat up on his back legs on the dried mud, and, holding the reed in his front paws, nibbled not more than a quarter of an inch of the three-foot reed; then he was ready for another, and after that for another. The meal ended, he washed himself with all the care described in the poem and trotted back across the dried mud to his home under the bush:

> "If cleanliness is next to godliness
> The old fat fellow's heaven's neighbour."

This water-rat, like many another old fat fellow, certainly had his place in the corporate life of Oxford. But when our friend went to his favourite seat in Addison's Walk, everything there was precisely as it used to be; the mud was still dry, the reeds were still bunched in the same patterned outlines, the little house had not yet been washed away by the water, only the water-rat was not there. The rat's absence hurt him. All the other old fat fellows were there, as prosperously and roundly present as ever; but his favourite had gone—to another hole on the stream's bank, or perhaps to another stream, or perhaps, even, to use the euphemistic

phrase, had gone to a better land; heaven's neighbour had passed to heaven's kingdom. Our friend missed the touch of a vanished paw and grew sad. He fell into a reverie. And in his reverie his furry favourite became a scholar in the lore of the stream and in the history of the reeds, and very learned in the music of the weir. Other rats consulted him; young rats sat in rows to listen to his words and learn how to make the best of life. What was the best in a rat's life, he was beginning vaguely to wonder, when his thought took a sharp and disconcerting turn to the personal, and confronting him inquired with sudden vigour what was the best in a man's life.

The intruder helped him towards this painful brink by shouting to him to drop his analogy or work it more bravely out: and the rude fellow began to chuckle as he watched the dreamer grow dizzy at the prospect. Not content with that, he gave him a dangerous push towards destruction by insisting how far that secret was divulged to young men in the University. All ways in this bewildering place seemed to lead him to the same blank wall. But the unexpectedness of this last obstruction served at any rate one good purpose by enabling our friend to realise exactly how far he was

himself from understanding the elements of education. If a pistol had been held to his head for an answer to the question what was the most essential thing for a young man to learn, he would have been obliged in all honesty to murmur "shoot"; for he did not know. Still less could he have answered how that unknown secret could be taught. And realising his twofold ignorance he had the grace to write down the old fat fellow as heaven's neighbour and to leave him at that, without prying into the usefulness of his knowledge of the stream's lore or of the history of the weir's music. Just to be a water-rat was an achievement, to which the facts that he was interesting to watch and regular in his habits were added qualities.

§ 7.

One morning our friend walked into the quadrangle of University College—and an obvious fact leapt suddenly from the outer region of things seen into the inner region of things felt. The fact was again, in so far as that is logically possible, a contrast. It happened in this way. He was standing in the porch, which at that time of the morning was empty except for an occasional hurried entrance or

exit and the college cat who sat dishevelled and humped among a heap of bicycles; and as was always the case, however often he stood in that porch, he was the prey of trooping memories. Before him the quad became the stage of bygone scenes, at the enactment of which he had been happily present. Here, a tangerine orange had missed his head (he smelt it pass) and had smashed against the wall: there, was the grating down which a sovereign had rolled, one of the sovereigns for which two ridiculous fourth year men had been tossing before luncheon, while he with a freshman's eye of awe had watched them and wondered: there—but the college cat walked up to him and slowly began to sharpen her claws on his leg, treating him, as he deserved, like a wooden post. It was due probably to her long claws that his discovery was made. They recalled him from the dreaming Past into the painful Present. He looked back into the High, and turned round again to front the quad, and he seemed to see it for the first time. It is always a pleasant experience to look with new eyes at a very dear old friend. Four hundred years' mowing, he thought, as he looked at the green plushiness of the grass, and remembered the famous reply of the gardener to the American's question. He was struck again by

the quiet beauty of the lawn, and he walked slowly round the dark-grey path of stone slabs that divided and edged the grass. There is nothing that bears the same appearance of attention as a college quadrangle on a normal day. Nothing looks so trim and so cared for. Each blade of grass seemed in its place, like hair that has been newly combed and brushed. The square trim shape, the uniform windows in long lines in the grey walls—it was all symmetrical and ordered. He could almost hear in the ordered quiet the regular ticking of the clock, pointing the peaceful, irrevocable steps of Time's advance. He turned his head casually to look in at the wide-open windows of an empty room on the ground floor, and then it was that the contrast leaped upon our friend's cognisance, with the surprising suddenness of a salmon trout's leap. For the room was in the wildest disorder, which the Scout's vague attempt to straighten had only served to accentuate. Half the table was laid for lunch; the other half was a motley heap of books and papers and caps and a tennis racquet: two putters and some golf balls lay on the floor. All the interests and implements of an untidy young male thing's existence were scattered broadcast. All a life's secrets seemed there

exposed in gay haphazard, so that our friend blushed at the involuntary intrusive glance which had revealed them to him. There was no inner meaning to this blazing contrast. There seldom is. It just existed—glaringly existed. And just at that moment the gardener appeared with his roller and began carefully to roll the grass, stooping every now and then to pick up a burned match which had escaped his previous sweeping.

What had been an untidier room than that, the nearest to the wall of the Hall, was now a lecture room, named after its untidy occupant. "His features breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance. Nor was the moral expression less beautiful than the intellectual; for there was a softness, a delicacy, a gentleness, and especially (though this will surprise many) that air of profound religious veneration that characterises the best works, and chiefly the frescoes (and into these they infused their whole souls) of the great masters of Florence and of Rome." So writes Hogg of Shelley, and soon after describes the confusion of those rooms, which Shelley was only to inhabit for six months. "Books, boots, paper, shoes, philosophical

instruments, clothes, pistols, linen, crockery, ammunition and phials innumerable, with money, stockings, prints, crucibles, bags and boxes, were scattered on the floor and in every place. . . . An electrical machine, an air-pump, the galvanic trough, a solar microscope were conspicuous amidst the mass of matter. Upon the table were . . . a piece of deal, lately part of the wood of a box, with many chips, and a handsome razor that had been used as a knife. . . . Two piles of books supported the tongs, and these upheld a small glass retort above an argand lamp."

Our friend took his Hogg's "Life of Shelley" out of his pocket, and leaning against the outer wall of the room that had been thus used, read through again the familiar pages. "He was indeed a whole university in himself to me in respect of the stimulus and incitement which his example afforded to my love of study." And later: "I lighted him downstairs with the stump of a candle which had dissolved itself into a lamp, and I soon heard him running through the quiet quadrangle in the still night. That sound became afterwards so familiar to my ear that I still seem to hear Shelley's hasty steps."

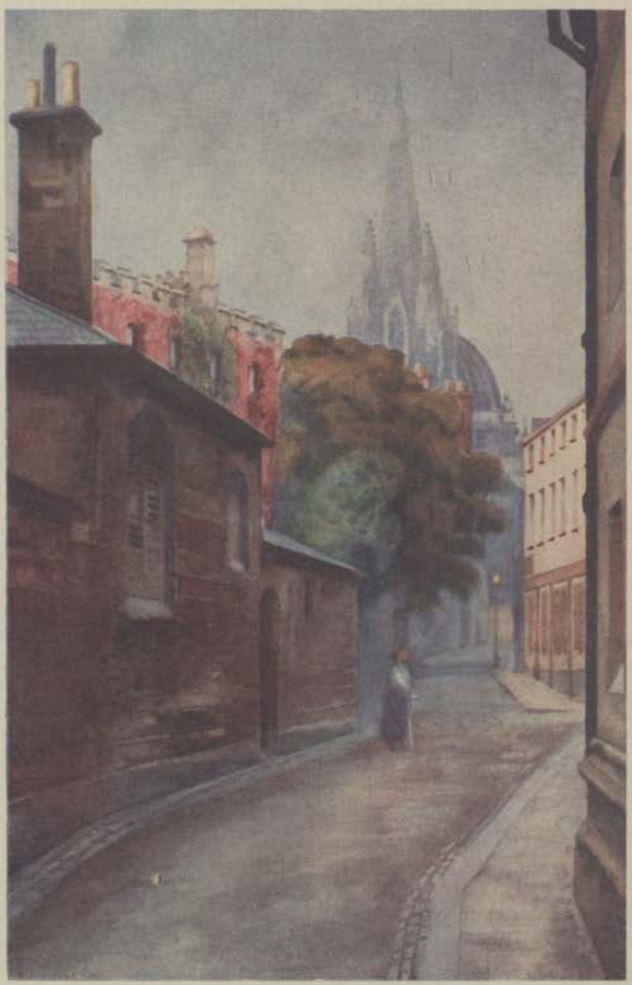
Then he put his book in his pocket, and

went to look at the tribute which the College had paid to the honour of Shelley's six months' residence. He peered through the prison bars at the beautiful effigy recumbent, very much as he had at first peered through the cold print of the verse to find the spirit of the man's poetry.

§ 8.

There are many immediate approaches to the enchanted circle in Oxford in which the colleges stand; and of this circle the Bodleian is, to waive the geometrical point, the spiritual centre. The High, the Broad, Holywell, the House and St. Giles, and, just outside the circle, Worcester with its gardens—not often does so small an area contain such great and diverse beauty. The most famous approach is over Magdalen Bridge, and the most usual is from the Railway Station; but there are others. From the river, through Christ Church meadows by Grove Street into the High—Grove Street, which was more quaintly attractive before Oriel began to grow; or from North Oxford with its modern villas and houses by Woodstock or Banbury road into the immense width of St. Giles with its line of

trees, past St. John's College to Balliol and The Martyrs' Memorial. By all of these and many others our friend made his way into the great fairy ring. But one morning he happened upon a circuitous mode of entry which delighted by affording him yet another and a most singular contrast. For he walked from the suburban streets of nice demure houses which comprise North Oxford and are to be found on the outskirts of most provincial towns, straight across the Parks; he skirted the cricket-field, where on one illustrious occasion he had seen R. E. Foster lift W. G. six times running out of the ground (after the sixth hit the old man walked slowly up the pitch, arm outstretched, and shook the batsman's hand), and went on across the centre of the sloping green expanse, and out by the Nunnery along Church Road between the grounds of New College, Merton, and Balliol, past the old Racquet Courts once famous for "Fug Soccer," now the home of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, into Holywell. There at the curve of Holywell he stopped and looked towards Magdalen Gardens; then he turned to the right up Holywell by the little aged odd-shaped houses of stucco and stone and old red brick, on which the new buildings of New College



GROVE STREET

whitely stare. The hall-doors, sometimes of old oak, touch the pavement; to some there is a step down from the pavement, some you must surely stoop to enter, unless you are very small of stature. There is every shape of window, but most are latticed. As you walk along, some windows are on a level with your waist, and you glance down to catch a glimpse through green curtains of wonderful interiors, where great brown beams cross the ceilings, where there are strange old grates and fire-places, where the ceilings slope and the floors quaintly undulate. Our friend seemed to be in another world to that in which the commodious villas flourished. In these old houses exciting people must have lived, they were the homes of scholars, antiquaries, poets: those commodious villas merely told comfortable stories of comfort. And at this point in his walk the intruder interrupted savagely that his reflections were as unjust and as unhealthily tumble-down as the wretched little houses; but he succumbed a little sulkily to the charge of longing to live in one of them. That was after all the point. The old houses were built for people to live in; home now was apt to be a place to which duty tied you, and from which you tried to get away at the earliest possible

moment. The ease of travel had produced that slight drawback. In these little old houses you felt that people had quietly established themselves and firmly lived. A little dully perhaps, you might think, until you remembered Herbert or Fuller or Traherne, and the list of keen worthies began to grow apace, starting from those three. And Donne—there were places where all these great fellows might suitably live in this one street. They abode in one place, for the most part, or slowly determined to travel—so slowly that they almost lived along the route, as Pope's spider lived along the line.

Now, you could jaunt over the world at a moment's notice, and fretted against the little chains that held you back. Now, too, information was put within every man's reach, which not more than ·001 of mankind could put to any use. Men were blind babies in the face of modern advantages. And the man who could turn newspaper knowledge to best account became a politician.

But our friend turned down Bath Place, and got even farther from the modern world of newspapers and villas. Bath Place is an alley for footmen, which zigzags by tiny houses and rambling little cottages, and eventually comes

out (if you have not previously lost yourself) in New College Street, which becomes Queen's Lane, in the same way as Fleet Street becomes the Strand. If you get as far as the bewildering middle of Bath Place and in finding the right way under the arch between two houses have not penetrated so many private abodes that you shamefacedly turn back before the way becomes normally clear, then look round to the left and you will see above a tree and above a wall a tower of New College most darkly and most beautifully rising into the sky. For just where the maze becomes easy, and you may after much stooping and crampedness straighten out your mind and body, the prospect widens to a surprising change. The tiny rambling houses cluster round high dark walls and the high dark tower rises superbly from its clustered surroundings. You seem to see it then as you were meant to see it.

This was, as it should be, one of our friend's favourite places. He walked on into New College Street, and in a little turned to look at the newly built chapel of Hertford and liked it. Then he went on between the great black crumbling walls, between which the street winds like a sluggish river, and out into the High. And to the High there is no better approach. He

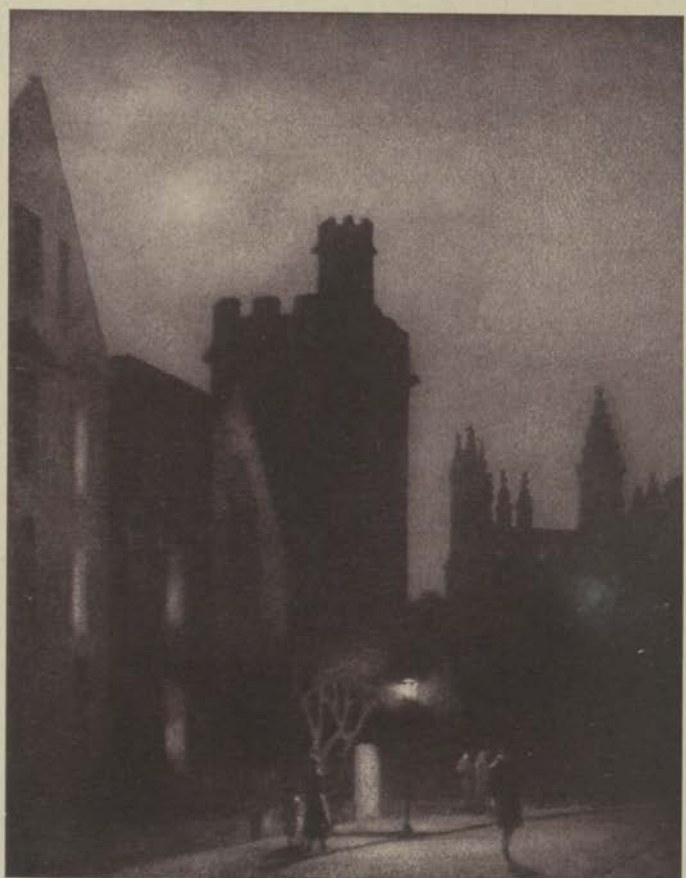
seemed that morning to have walked through many centuries.

But he would not take the learned young don that way. He feared his disquisitions and his architectural enthusiasm; and thereby probably did him wrong. Really too in his heart our friend was ashamed that he had not liked Bath Place more when he was "up," and remembered that the young don had lived in rooms in its very centre. And the facts, taken together, might trick the don into putting on edge, as the undergraduates say, about the matter. And that would be absolutely unnecessary. So he mused on his way back and decided to make a detour through New College gardens.

"Is this New?" asked the babe, who was up from school for a scholarship examination, of a solemn first year man.

"No," was the serious answer, "it is very old." And the answer was funny because it came from a genuine understanding. New College is never called New as Magdalen is never called Magdalen College, but always in full New College.

Our friend was more convinced than ever that the beauty of these gardens must be seen to be believed. Otherwise it is incredible. It is not that the flowers are specially beautiful;



NEW COLLEGE TOWER

without very elaborate pains or expense they might easily be bettered—(a long line of tall blue lupins near that black-grey stone wall, for instance). It is not their proximity to beautiful old buildings. At Penshurst Place, at Worcester College, at the villa of the Medici near Signa there were finer effects in that way. But it is that New College gardens seem to be not so much near as an actual part of the great building, surrounded as they are by the old city wall. That thick savage wall, with its cruel turrets and fierce battlements and cunning peepholes is no longer needed for defence against the onslaught of enemies but encloses the peace and beauty of the garden. The gentle garden has overcome its harsh severity; stout wall-flowers and delicate ferns grow in its crannies; the softest moss soothes the unyielding stonework; trees wave over its unflinching bulk; the sloping grass rushes gaily almost up to its very feet. It is as though the elves and fairies had conspired together to make an ugly, thick giant beautiful and had most elfishly succeeded; they have turned the unwieldy mass of him to their own lovely uses, and there he now lies at full length and by his very bulk makes their garden pre-eminently beautiful. When the moon shines, be sure that other games than

bowls are played over that smooth sloping lawn.

But our friend searched in vain for one, whom like Blake's small sir, he could catch in his hat as boys catch a butterfly, and who would sit upon the table and dictate to him, as Blake's fairy sat upon Blake's table and dictated "Europe." For one thing, he looked in vain for a streaked tulip. *Sic itur ad astra.*

§ 9.

Our friend was in a College library and opened a dumpy volume, brown with age, at random; it was the fifth of five equally dumpy volumes in a long shelf full of books drab-brown with age. He idly read :—"Whoever it was, *Soffius*, that wrote the Poem in praiſe of *Alcibiades* upon his winning the Horſe race at the *Olympian* Games, whether it were *Euripides* (as 'tis moſt commonly reported) or ſome other Perſon, he ſays, That to a Man's being happy, it is in the firſt place requiſite he ſhould be born in ſome famous City ; but for him that would attain unto true happineſs, which for the moſt part is placed in the qualities and diſpoſition of the mind, it is, in my opinion, of no other diſ-advantage to be of a mean obſcure Country,

than to be born of a Woman that is uncomely and low of Stature. . . . Other Arts indeed, whoſe end it is to acquire Riches or Honour, are likely enough to wither and decay in poor obſcure Towns; but Vertue like a ſtrong and durable plant takes root and thrives in any place, where it can lay hold of an ingenious Nature, and a mind that is induſtrious." He read on and on with the faint remembrance of having read the passage before, though "The Life of Demosthenes," which boldly headed the fatly printed short page, did not help him. Idly he read on, and happily, for the light came in upon him through a stained glass and he was surrounded by books, above him and below him and on every side. Plutarch, he placidly thought, surely ; and shifted his weight from the left leg to the right, while he turned to the title-page —carefully so as not in any way to try the crumbling strength of the binding. Plutarch it was, and an old translation, but not by Sir Thomas North. It was translated from the Greek by several hands, and printed for Jacob Tonson within Grays-Inn-Gate, next Grays-Inn-Lane in the year 1700. Who were the industrious scholars that thought another translation of Plutarch was necessary? He turned another page and beheld, Dr. Nelson, Dr. Frazer, Dr. Fuller

(not *the* Thomas Fuller, the Endeavourer?—he hastily found p. 297—it was the Thomas Fuller who had translated the Life of Cicero), Dr. Uvedale, and some others. These industrious scholars and Jacob Tonson had decided that North's translation was too inaccurate and had themselves made an able translation, which, as he glanced through it, seemed incredibly more antique than North. He came upon this note, which amused him: "Here the old English translator makes a pleasant mistake, for whereas Amyor calls Peloponnesus Prescu-Isle, that is Peninsula, the old translator tells us news of a certain Island of Peloponnesus, cal'd Presche, Sister to the Isle of Pines." The note seemed illustrative of much, as he looked round among these brown rows of scholarly, forgotten books. It was unfortunate for the little band of scholars, who cared for their Greek original, that the old translator whose pleasant mistakes tickled their fancies, should live on as a great English classic, largely because he influenced a Warwickshire boy, a poacher who ran away to the stage-players. North hardly knew any Greek. He was content to use the French version of Jacques Amyot, and improve upon that—a shameless proceeding in the eyes of these scholars.

He looked a little sadly at all the old books

round him, and thought of the care which had gone to their making and of their eventual fate. And the singular good fortune of Plutarch, the Bœotian, struck him afresh. To have fallen into the hands of Jacques Amyot, to whom Montaigne gave the palm among French writers —Montaigne whom Shakespeare respected as deeply as he respected Sir Thomas North. There were better scholars now than these learned doctors (though there were few wiser and few wittier men than Thomas Fuller and none more industrious), but North's Plutarch is a masterpiece of English prose. These sermons, these commentaries—now reverently kept in college libraries and abandoned—all told of good lives led, and marked the slow advance of learning. Around him lay the thoughts of humanity, stored. And he smiled to think of writers like Aristotle and like Plato : that generations of scholars over all the world should be kept busily occupied through the centuries in editing the works of one man. Printed matter held such dominion over our friend that the great room lined and packed with books grew gloomy and dark before he could pull himself away from loitering among a very few of them. Ah ! the books that had been written and the books that remained for

men to write! The heavy door clanged behind him and he was reluctantly on the outside again. He pulled out his watch: Blackwell's was lighted and was not yet shut. He strode into the Broad and was among books again. And now he had the perilous knowledge that any book he liked he might possess, and that any book he bought would be an extravagance. He reeled away at length with an enormous folio under his arm, as happy and as conscience-stricken as any drunkard.

§ 10.

Our friend at last in his room grew lyrical, in spite of the antimacassars.

There were little hidden beauties, too, numerous as the jewels woven into the dress of a medieval queen—intimate little things to delight the eye of a lover. The whole fair raiment, in every shade of grey and green, spoke grace and power, which Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter must surely delight to deck with their varying colours and their varying lights and shades. Who is so responsive to their bidding as this lady among cities? Who so sensitive to every delicate change of beauty, so strong to every appeal?

IN THE BROAD

There is scope for the gallantry of the seasons in her gardens and rivers and grey, creeper-clad buildings. She stands between the hills in a stream-pierced valley; and in that long valley the meadow-land is a little richer, the grass is a little greener and the buttercups and kingcups are fairer and more golden than in other valleys. Often the mists rise to wrap her closely in their grey swathing, that she may shine more gladly in the dancing sunshine. If thick clouds skulk across the sun, the wind blows with keen anger. On the days when the rain drenches continuously, sullenly down, her beauty ennobles the general distress.

You should see her on a windy morning in the Spring. The young green is leaping to life in the black trees and bare creepers. Silver-white clouds, round and jolly, are playing across the sky—now they frown blackly, now they burst into a great laugh, flinging down showers of jewels, and now they dance off in a gay multitude. The sun gleams dazzling out. The great trees wave their branches, and the joy of the wind trembles in the bud-laden twigs and sets the creepers quivering with glee against the grey old walls to which their suckers cling. The big river flows by with enormous gaiety stretching itself out to reflect in its broad water

as much of the universal joy as it may; the little river overflows its banks, most naughtily, in its effort to come nearer to the lady-city, and passes under Magdalen Bridge, softly chuckling to be at last so near her.

You should see her on a still evening in the autumn. The sun is slowly sinking. Quiet broods between heaven and earth—the hush of awe at a ceremony. The sky is a great, yellow flame, which wraps the grey buildings in its reflection, a motionless flame that imperceptibly fades. There is no leaf on any tree which stirs, and all the leaves of the creepers glow tranquilly with colour, as though stayed for that majestic moment in their life's growth up the old walls. The river flows by so silently, it takes the colour of the sky so deeply, that it does not seem to move, but to lie firm and still, like an ancient shield of burnished gold. There is no movement. All things stand at gaze in adoration; only round the turrets and round the tall spires and the pinnacles light trembles and plays in a haze of tremulous colour. Royally the lady-city plays her part in the festival that such an evening is, a festival in honour of the worth and beauty of Life.

Those are her great days, when she declares herself to all men. Her favourites know that

from hour to hour she changes and is never the same, except in her queenliness. Each owns in his heart a special beauty, for which he looks and about which he is proud and silent. There she lies in all her beauty between the hills, but only her lovers know how beautiful she is.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

§ 1.

BEFORE our friend had come into residence as an undergraduate—had "come up," as the genially inclusive phrase is—he had had the good fortune to spend six months at a German University. Turning things over in a meditatively reminiscent mood, he was struck by the many differences which he now for the first time noticed between what he knew of the life at Göttingen and what he knew of the life at Oxford. No comparison was possible for him, because the conditions of life at either place were too completely different. At Göttingen he had been a stranger among foreigners, and at Oxford he happened to have been a stranger among fellow-countrymen, because he had not gone straight from school to college. At the outset stood, like some guardian monster against comparison, the great elemental difference between a place where you lived with certain freedoms and advan-

tages as a student, and a place where you lived under fixed rules as a member of a college. He had become a member of Göttingen University chiefly because he wanted the privilege of attending the State theatre at half price and of attending German lectures on English literature. Being a member of an Oxford college, and having an introduction to a Sanskrit professor, there was no difficulty in the process. He walked at the right hour of the right day with other young men into a small room in a big building, and waited in the small room until his turn came to be ushered into another small room at a table in which sat the professors and at the head of the table the vice-chancellor. The vice-chancellor sternly at first asked him several questions which his total ignorance of German prevented him answering. The situation tickled the great man and his sternness relaxed.

Kindly relapsing into English, he soon sent our friend away armed with a paper, enormous as a manifesto, impressive as a warrant of arrest for high treason, and a little badge which put him outside the authority of the town. He went back to his rooms and the matter ended. He might do as he pleased precisely as much as before. Had he not been a foreigner his

case would have been slightly different, and more different still had he been, as the majority fortunately are, a poor student. And for this reason. The hold the University takes is simple and strong. "I guarantee you," she says, "employment in proportion to your merit." Accordingly the student does his utmost to impress his identity upon his professor by every means in his power; he is not, as in Oxford is frequently the case, coaxed or threatened into attending lectures and working for the glory perhaps of his College. But the German student, being wise and young, does not immediately buckle into his harness. It often too happens that he is able to spend a year at a University before putting in his military service, and then to finish his studentship after his military service.

This and other facts our friend discovered soon after his matriculation. One morning he was seated in his room working, and the weather being exceedingly hot his costume began in a white flannel shirt and ended in white flannel trousers. As the morning wore on and the heat increased, even socks became superfluities, and he had just at twelve o'clock unbuttoned his shirt and rolled up his sleeves in a last attack with a dictionary upon Heine's "Harzreise"

when a rap sounded on the door and his summons to enter admitted not the anticipated little, hardworking servant, but a gentleman in a black frock coat, buttoned at the waist for a beautifully becoming bulge above, with grey suède gloves upon his hands, and in his right hand a shining silk hat. The gentleman, stout and tall, stood bowing profusely by the door; nor was his courtesy, in its profusion, at all due to shyness. Our friend was astonished, and watched in his astonishment the silk hat moving most properly with each bow a little way upwards as the body was inclined a little forward. It was a moment that lasted and lived. Then our friend, braving pins and splinters, hurried forward with hand outstretched in welcome and conducted his visitor to the sofa behind the table, which he had already learned to be a place of honour. Forthwith he began to make the acquaintance of a German student, who lived in the same flat as himself, but who up to that time had existed for him as a thing of rumour. The conversation, begun with the help of a fat dictionary which lay before them, progressed slowly but in so exactly the right direction that it hit the roots of what became friendship. From that friendship our friend saw much and learnt much of German student

life. Now it may be thought that this call was the immediate result of matriculation. That was not, however, the case. That this private recognition should have followed so closely as it did upon his official recognition was the merest accident. All the student knew was that a young Englishman was living in the house; he thought the young Englishman might be lonely and might further his studies in English; that they might be in fact mutually useful, so he had called at the formal hour in the formally correct dress, never worn by him except in honour of some equally august occasion.

Our friend remembered this punctilious ceremony with some amusement when, as a freshman some months later, he received a first call from some other men of his own year. His door one evening was loudly beaten and opened almost before he could cry out "Come in." Four jovial men pushed themselves arm-in-arm into his room and announced that they had come to see what kind of men lived on the Kitchen Staircase. They were notable fellows from a famous school who had come up, blues in embryo, with immense reputations, and a visit from them was an honour to anyone who, like our friend, was without any reputation at

all. They commented freely on his pictures and photographs; and genially departed to the rooms next door on the same kindly errand of inspection. The difference of approach was exceedingly characteristic, however similar in essentials the young human animal of eighteen or twenty years may in all countries be.

§ 2.

The stout and amiable student introduced our friend to so many other students that very soon he was sweeping off his hat with the best of them, in the promenade along the main street before *Mittagsessen*, which he soon took with P. H. (his new friend) and another student in the *Theaterkeller*—a little restaurant underneath the theatre. There they gave you a dinner sufficient to stay the hunger of a student, that is to say, an enormous dinner, for a mark a day, on condition that you took wine on Sundays and informed the cook when you would be absent. The room formed a great circle, in the middle of which stood a billiard table and a large musical box which played waltzes when a *pfennig* was put into the slot. The circumference was cut up into little alcoves, according to the structural demands of

the building, in each of which a table stood; and at one of these tables our friend quickly came to feel very much at home. Often when he sat in "hall" at Oxford, he used to think of the little alcove. To hurry through "hall" as quickly as possible was the feat; and of course as he lingered in his little alcove he counted the days till he should be actually living in college. Suffice it to say that he enjoyed both immensely, just because of their supreme differences.

P. H.'s programme for the day was a thing of wonder. So wonderful indeed did it seem to our friend that he tested the accuracy of its execution. It stood every test nobly. P. H. rose at seven-thirty a.m., dressed, and at eight partook of much coffee and one roll. From eight to twelve he worked at Old English or Middle English, taking voluminous notes. At twelve he sallied out for a turn down the Main Street, which brought him to the *Theaterkeller* punctually at twelve-thirty. There he remained—busy and without coffee—until two, when he strolled, necessarily slowly, through the Park till three. At three he worked again until eight; then he supped and went four nights in the week to a *verein*—beer and songs. He came home usually between the hours of

MERTON STREET

two and three, but was up again punctually at seven-thirty. On Sundays there was a variation. On Sundays he took exercise. He would walk through the woods for thirty or even forty miles, and in defiance of all laws of condition awoke next morning neither tired nor stiff. On one Sunday, in the same unchanged dark suit, he played lawn tennis furiously from eight in the morning till past twelve. That shocked our friend, who was fresh from a public school. He had no strict sabbatical scruples, but he felt in his inmost soul that if you played tennis you ought to put on flannels, and that if you walked into the country you ought not to wear the same suit that you wore at a lecture. The total lack of any feeling for rightness in dress shocked him; that is to say, he was forced to exercise a strong effort of will not to tick his new friends summarily off as "bad men," and to have done with them. A sense of humour saved him. It saved him again at Oxford when the cold eye of criticism was fixed upon him, and he knew his own costume in some way sinned against conformity. Why shouldn't a man if he likes wear a frock coat and brown boots? There is no proper answer. The indubitable fact remains that he must not. Wear a stick in

Oxford when sticks are not being carried, and be sensitive enough to realise the feelings you excite, then you will understand. But you must be an undergraduate yourself; and that perhaps makes the experiment too exacting.

P. H. added as a corollary to his astounding programme that he was working now. And on being pressed to be more lucid, he explained that the year he had spent at Jena had been devoted to the making of debts and to the lighter side of student life. At Jena he had been a corps-student. There was a world of meaning in his wink at the gay past and his sigh for the laborious present, but not enough meaning for our friend, who plied him to be more explicit, and eventually learned that the advantages of a corps—its club-house, its *Mütze* (or club cap), its fêtes—chiefly depended upon your pledge to fight a duel when called upon. Quarrelsome bodies? Not so. Not so at all. The duels were arranged quite amicably. One corps challenged another, and students from either corps were drawn by lot as representatives, and the lot decided the couples. Supposing an imbecile were drawn against an expert? A shrug showed what bad fortune the event was likely to prove for the imbecile. Then it could be no exhibition of skill. Of

what was it supposed to be an exhibition? Of courage; to test the calibre of a man. It was a national institution. There followed a heated argument on the nature of courage, an argument that was personal and national and dangerous. But the danger was avoided by a flat invitation to witness a duel, and the invitation was gladly accepted. Only amicable duels would be seen. And duels that were not amicable? Ah! that was a serious matter, in which honour was concerned. The combatants were bare to the waist, and only their eyes and necks were protected. A gesture of incredulity brought a savage assertion of proof to be given at the earliest opportunity. And how such a thing could be proved should in due course be seen. Meanwhile the duelling was to take place on the next day but one, at eight o'clock in the morning.

At six on a beautiful summer morning our friend rose and dressed himself. Duelling was against the law, and could not be held within the precincts of the town. It took place at an inn in a small village six miles distant. The inn was so placed that it commanded a conveniently extensive view of the road from the town; a watch was kept, and in the event of a raid from the authorities the alarm could be

given so that when the *Polizei* arrived they would find the most peaceful of breakfast parties in happy progress and not a sword or a spot of blood would be anywhere visible. The raids of course were a matter of form. The large eye of authority winked, a little stupidly perhaps, at the duelling.

The road was long and dusty and hot. The regular line of cherry-trees gave little shade. Poverty was pestilential that made the ten marks for a carriage impossible. At length however they arrived, and a word admitted them to a huge, barnlike room, full of students smoking cigars and drinking beer. They stood in little groups talking and laughing. A sword was brought for our friend to feel. The blade was unexpectedly sharp and cut the skin of his thumb; he had touched the edge too clumsily. Then two students removed their coats and were swathed like mummies and prepared. Huge spectacles protected their eyes; their cheeks and heads were exposed. One looked a young boy before the swaddling process obscured him; the other a nearly middle-aged man. Probably, however, ten years did not separate their ages. A circle was formed; the talk and laughter went gaily on. The boy was obviously using all his will-power

to tighten the muscles of his legs and to laugh. The elder man seemed unnaturally jaunty. He tried to curl his moustache, forgetting how thickly his hand was gloved. Two students, masked and padded, stooping, held the combatants at the proper distance apart with outstretched swords. The combatants raised their swords in the regulation attitude. Then there was a moment's hush. One clash of the swords. The talking and laughter grew louder after cries of "Hübsches Schmiss." Doctors, dressed in white, smoking cigars, came forward and dressed a cut in the boy's head. The smell of iodoform became stronger than the smell of the cigar smoke. Five minutes later there was another moment's hush. The swords, however, during this round did not clash: only the boy's cheek was bleeding from a long cut. The doctors came forward; the dressing of the wound (the two stitches, the cotton-wool, the plaster) took just fifteen minutes, and the bout was resumed. The swords clashed twice; it was a long bout, lasting a full second and a quarter, and then a murmur of displeasure and excitement ran through all the assemblage. Our friend was at a loss to know the cause. There was no work for the doctors; only he had seen the two stooping guardians of distance

rise and strike back the swords of the fighters. P. H. was at first too excited to notice an amateur's questions. But what had happened was simply this—that the elder man had flinched. The start of an inch backwards of the head from the falling sword, disqualified; and though our friend had noticed no flinch of any kind the sterner, warier judges had given the victory to the boy who was being on all sides warmly congratulated. He was unwrapped and put on his coat and cap. Again our friend was shocked at the absence of the feeling for dress.

The next pair were even more badly matched to his novice's eye. One was an athlete, tall and elastic, with the build of a centre-three-quarter; the other was a little, fat man who, when swathed, seemed without exaggeration as broad as he was tall. Round in fact; and the neck protection pushed up to a prodigious bulge the flesh of his chins and cheeks. It was grotesque to see him take his place opposite his lithe, strong opponent, and the sword-point pressed against his chest to keep him the proper distance from his opponent seemed grotesquely unnecessary. Limply he held up his sword and feebly swung it. But the doctors were busy for nearly fifteen minutes with the rent in

his fat cheek. Fifteen minutes more to stanch the bleeding of a scalp-wound, and when he stood up for the third bout the blood squelched in his boots. Our friend's manliness was tried too highly by this noise, and by the pungent smell of iodoform and by the dropping of the poor little fat man's cheek cut open. He walked through a wavering room to the fresh air where on the flag-stones of a shrub-encircled yard he fell flat in a faint; and when he returned to the room after two Cognacs the duelling was over for that morning. The little fat man and the other fighters were fêted for the rest of the day. Hats were swept off very low to them, as they triumphed down the Main Street at midday, in deference to their honourable wounds —except the elder man who had flinched at the boy's sword. His *Mütze* was taken from him, and other direr penances were inflicted before he might rejoin the corps.

§ 3.

Of course our friend tried to moralise upon the affair, both as he walked back, still quivering and weak-kneed at the sight of what seemed nothing else than unskilful bloodshed, and later as he sat and turned over in his mind his experiences of human nature at Oxford and

Göttingen. He was baffled. Not even the quick-witted intruder could utter any cutting ejaculation. He was completely baffled, as an intelligent Chinaman must be the first time he witnesses seventy thousand people watching with breathless excitement twenty-two men kicking an inflated, leather-protected bladder about a field, gladly risking life and limb in its pursuit. It was almost as sensible as modern war. He was simply content to gape with wonder, as one is frequently compelled to do when face to face with what are called the facts of human nature. The most extraordinary thing is that each man by himself, if he had the power, would immediately stop the practice, but any given band of men together would put themselves to considerable inconvenience to continue and uphold what each one severally in his heart condemned. The intelligence of a crowd is equal to the lowest common denominator of the individuals collected—the very lowest; especially perhaps when the crowd is composed of young men.

However, our friend, as is usual in cases of strong indignation, shook himself and laughed. His knees quickly regained their normal power and he wisely enough, as he smiled to remember, shut his gaping mouth and went on living.

Nor were his duelling experiences at an end. The proof, at which P. H. had darkly hinted, that duels were fought among students to satisfy injured honour, took place a few days afterwards. One morning about twelve, he was seated by arrangement negligently reading a book and expectant in P. H.'s room, when the little maid-of-all-work announced the visit of a gentleman. A gentleman, moreover, entered in full evening dress, and bowing deeply referred to a regrettable incident of the night before with many apologies for its occurrence. P. H. bowed more deeply, took the words of apology out of his mouth, pooh-poohed the whole affair with a kind of courteous hauteur, and soon, with many compliments and courtesies, the interview, amazing in its undiluted seriousness, ended.

The fellow, it was explained, had long been offensive to P. H., who on the previous evening had allowed matters to come to a head at the *Kneipe*, had taken offence, had slapped his face, had challenged him. A duel would have been fought unless a prompt and complete apology had been given. That apology, in its full ceremony, had just been witnessed. He had, too, the humour to add, with a twinkle in his eye which up to that moment had been sternly

grave, in harmony with the gravity of the proceedings, that the offender's examination, upon which much depended, took place in a few weeks and that it was a moral certainty he would not fight—— But if he had not apologised? Ah! then the twinkle vanished.

And while he remembered this scene, as our friend most vividly did remember it, another scene came prominently into his mind, thrusting everything else on one side. He was walking through the streets of Oxford arm in arm with a great friend with whom he had been dining. Reserved this man was, taciturn some wrongly said, and extremely conscientious. This evening his reserve and his conscience were lulled, and as they walked to his rooms through the quadrangle (the moon shone on the old, grey buildings, lending its own enchantment) they felt simply happy together. His rooms were on the ground floor; they turned, with a last look at the effect of moonlight on grey stone, into a passage, stumbled a few steps in the darkness, opened the door, fumbled for the switch, clicked on the light and stood,—stood quite still looking at what the light revealed. On the big round table, in the middle of the room just under the light, in a heap were piled indiscriminately his books, his pictures, his

cushions, his easy-chairs upside down; on the top of the pile, as the crown of the mischief, was placed the coal-scuttle, inverted, the black contents of which in lump and dust were generously scattered over all his possessions. There was nothing to be done, except laboriously to set the room to rights, and to sweep up with a clothes-brush (the hearth-brush was not stiff enough) as much of the coal-dust as possible. One of four or five men (or all of them) might have been responsible. Certain high members of the college boat-club had taken exception to the quiet, reserved man's refusal to row in some boat, and had shown their resentment in this strangely disgusting manner. The justice or injustice of their resentment did not seem to matter. As it happened, the man was perfectly justified in his refusal.

But the memory of this occurrence, and of one or two others, prevented our friend's feelings about the duelling from running patriotically away with him. Though duelling did not do away with such ragging, it was inclined to foster a certain reverence for the individual which in a community of young men was wholesome. But between aspects of malice and other absurdities there is very little to

choose; and there is less malice than at a first sight seems probable. Look at spontaneity and that will lead you farther towards the truth of the matter. By its light apparent contradictions no longer conflict. And spontaneity sang in the German students. Their chief tradition was the tradition of joy and light-heartedness. Their pleasures were not organised. Their games had not the stringent rules and enormous seriousness of cricket and football and the rest of it. They knew how to enjoy themselves. Our friend found almost as many who had their own theory of the meaning of the second part of "Faust" as who threw a stone "like a girl."

§ 4.

However in his judicial middle age our friend might look back and compare the advantages and defects of the two systems, there was no doubt at all that at the time he regarded his stay at Göttingen as an interval less painful than he had imagined between school and his going up to Oxford. He never felt for a moment that he was at a University. Oxford or Cambridge (and to him Oxford) was the only University in the world. Ever since he, as a little boy in an Eton jacket, had visited a

big brother at Oxford during the half-term holiday, Oxford had been the place of his golden dreams. Fate had at first whisked into the remote distance the hope of the dream's fulfilment, so that, when a sudden turn of her wheel made the dream an accomplished fact dependent only upon his ability to pass a simple examination, he awaited, breathless, the hideous accident which alone could prevent his going up. Responsions was passed. The time drew nearer. No accident happened. All through his sojourn at Göttingen, eventual residence in Oxford—and at the college in Oxford to which he was most dearly attached—loomed like the rosiest of clouds on his horizon, and so brightly that he could not look for long into its rosy depths. No lover awaited the arrival of his mistress with greater eagerness. And in our friend's anticipation there was no fear and no misgiving. In this he was unlike a lover. His joy, as the time drew nearer and nearer, became cumulative. His three years at Oxford was a solid shining fact, behind which the uncertainty of the future was entirely hidden. Circumstances may have made our friend's anticipatory joy exceptional in its intensity. There are doubtless many young men who look forward to Eton and Christ Church or Winchester and

New College as a sort of family institution, a matter of course, like having enough to eat and a comfortable bed to sleep on, rather a jolly matter of course, but not at all a matter about which it is necessary to get excited. There are, strange as it may seem, other young men who grudge their three or four years' residence at Oxford as time wasted from the real business of life, which *is* making their way in the world and increasing their incomes and position. But just as truly as these indifferent and clever ones exist, does there exist a large number who, like our friend, count the days till they can go up, and spin out their time of residence as a child spins out a sunny afternoon on the beach. They drink in beauty and happiness, and all the things that make life good, like the sunshine. And very often, as modern life is arranged, it is the only time in all their lives in which they are able to do so. Precisely, say the Preachers of Death, it unfits the youth of the nation for life, which is a serious business. In other words, it unfits them for the dreadful monotony of an existence which is a dull parody of what life is meant to be in a world where you can watch the sun sparkling in a dancing, silver line of light on a blue sea. At Oxford the conditions of life are good and right. Friends and laughter

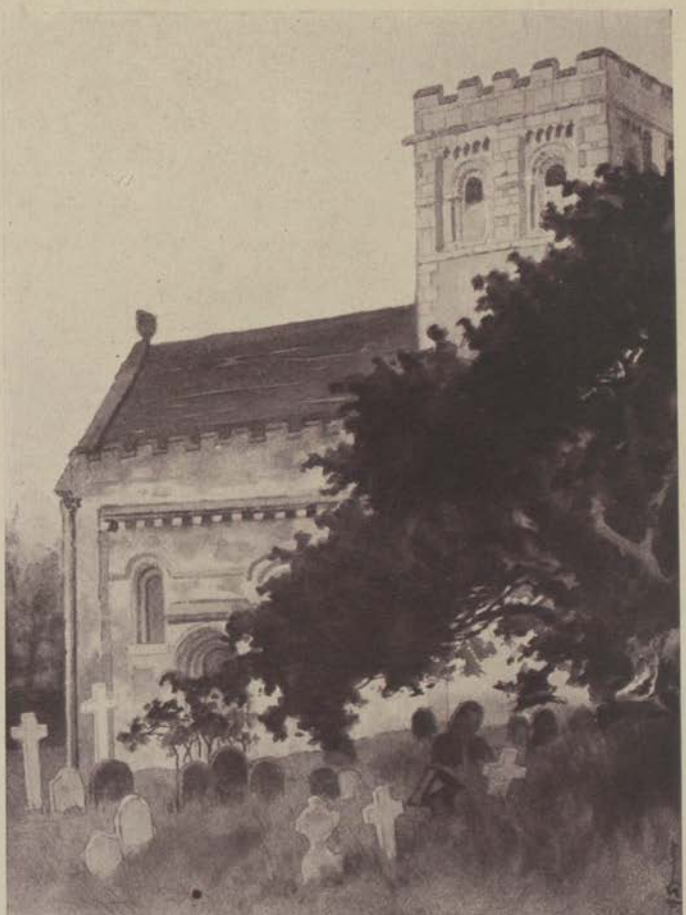
and work are within a man's grasp, and are not too sorely outweighed and disqualified by care and responsibility. There for a little while the test of a man is not, as it will in the big cities all too soon become, the amount of his bank-balance.

He passed the entrance examination to the college. The day came, when in order of seniority he chose with other freshmen his room. And at last the great day arrived on which he began to unpack his belongings in his own rooms, and made the acquaintance of the head-porter, the junior porter, the college messenger and the two scouts of his staircase. Much anticipation did not lessen his delight, and the strangeness of his surroundings only made the delight a little tremulous. There were so many things to do for the first time and each he did a little fearfully, and with great glee. The donning of his cap and gown, the first meal in Hall, the first lecture, the first time he came down the High from a walk and turned into the porch of his own college, and all the thousand and one little trivial things that marked out the lines of what was to be his life for three long years. Such joy leaves its stamp for ever on the memory. And as he sat remembering, our friend wandered in

thought again, as he had wandered that October morning after his first breakfast alone in his own room, having punctually kept, fully dressed of course, his first "roller," all through the grey colleges and green gardens; the trees and creepers were beginning to don their amber and golden apparel of Autumn, red too and red-brown and russet, and with all their brave colours they seemed in league with the struggling sunshine to scatter the cold, hovering mist. They caught the drops of the mist and transmuted them into every kind of precious stone. And then slowly the mist gave way. The sun shone gladly out. He remembered that morning. That morning made him understand the words of the Man of Laughter, who said that great joy leaves a more enduring mark than great sorrow, and that joy is the creative power. "Set around you small, good, perfect things. Their golden maturity healeth the heart. The perfect teacheth one to hope." The memory of that morning was a small, good, perfect thing.

§ 5.

The steps of entry into Oxford are more formal than into Göttingen, though some colleges admit men for a time into residence who



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have not passed Responsions, the entrance examination into the University. There are degrees, as it were, in the intensity of membership. A man can be a member of a college without being a member of the University, and a man can be a member of the University without being a member of a college. But such are exceptions.

The organisation of authority is simple and effective. It resembles in many ways, though on a bigger scale, the organisation of a public school, in which the different houses are under their own housemasters but are all under the final jurisdiction of the headmaster. Greater latitude is allowed to heads of colleges, and they have greater powers, but the Vice-Chancellor, who speaks for the University, has the last word. He is elected, and is supported by the proctor and junior proctors. The proctors keep an eye upon the general morality of the University, and there is a rumour, strongly believed by undergraduates, that they are assisted by a number of carefully disguised spies. An old man who sold walking-sticks was credited with being such a spy. Certainly, however, whether these spies exist or not, strange cases have been known of men, who have spoken to girls—in the light-heartedness of youth—being

requested next morning to visit the proctor and being warned by him that such conduct is not in accordance with the statutes of the University. This mystery lends spice to the little adventures, which are bound to happen. Then the junior proctors patrol the streets on certain evenings, because no undergraduate is allowed to be out after nine without his cap and gown. With him walk two swift and burly rogues, called bull-dogs. No one wears a cap and gown after nine, unless he has been to the Balliol concert on Sunday evening or is struck by a wave of obedience and economy, so when you are coming back from another college you are liable, if you are unfortunate, to be stopped by these stout ruffians. The junior proctor comes forward, and politely touching his cap asks you for your name and college, which he writes down in a little book, and asks you to call upon him next morning at nine. You do so, pay him five shillings and depart. There was a music-hall opened in our friend's time which the proctor used on occasion to visit and thereby materially increase the revenue of the University. It was said that the music-hall authorities asked the University authorities to intervene, as their establishment was designed for the people of Cowley rather than for the undergraduates.

And that may well have been. For on one occasion—a pantomime was being performed—the chief Babe in the Wood or Aladdin or Jack sang "King Charles he was" on and on to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, encouraging, as is the comedian's wont, the audience to sing with him. But he reckoned in this case without the large number of 'Varsity men in the audience. The words were simple and easily mastered. The tune was familiar and catchy. The audience answered only too well. They roared it out like one man. They continued to roar it out despite the efforts of the comedian to go on with the pantomime. The curtain was at length lowered. The manager came before the curtain, and there was a moment's silence, but directly he began to abuse the audience, his words were drowned in the terrible song. It was far too popular. The lights were turned on. There was confusion. At length the play proceeded, but the performers were foolish enough to let their loss of temper be apparent and the play in consequence proceeded with difficulty. A better company would have turned the interruption to triumphant account, but with that company it was as funny and as cruel as youth alone knows how to be.

Anyone not in college by midnight is reported by the porter, and is fined, unless his delinquency is found to be graver than hour-breaking, one sovereign. In consequence, as the hour of midnight sounds, you are apt to meet young men racing down the High and to hear great wooden doors banged by impatient fists, eager to be inside before the hour finishes striking and the great door is bolted. Once he is inside, no authority exists to put the undergraduate to bed, but the junior porter brings a message from the dean to any room in which there is too much noise. How much is too much, depends upon the judgment of the dean, or upon the immediate state of his nerves or of his conscience, as the case may be. The dean, moreover, bears in mind that repression is apt to mean rebellion, and he is tactful. The iron hand of authority is covered with the softest of velvet gloves—for many reasons.

The Master of our friend's college was an old man of reverent aspect who might on rare occasions be seen hurrying through the quads to his house, leaning slightly forward, a hand behind his back. He preached in the college chapel; they were fine sermons. You dined with him at stated intervals; they were good dinners. But the most extraordinary point

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about him was that, with no apparent opportunity of knowing anything about anyone in the college, he did, as a matter of magical fact, possess an uncannily intimate knowledge of all the men's characteristics. How he came by the knowledge was a baffling mystery. It must have been due to a tremendously developed instinct, which was carefully concealed by its owner. It was the exact opposite of the little air of omniscience, which many a dean and many a journalist wears like a false smile, and which deceives not even the most inept. And that is typical of the place. Just when you are becoming exasperated with the empty conceits and mannerisms of the prigs of learning you suddenly happen upon the deep, real thing in all its quiet and majestic strength. No one on the wide earth is quite so detrimental as the prigs of learning know how to be, and no one commands quite the same depth of reverence as these learned, great ones.

From the scouts to the dons and the dean upwards to the Master the authority of a college is deliberately organised with pains that are unknown to a German University. But it is extraordinary how much the authorities are able to recognise and countenance without loss

of dignity, and always the claims of Bacchus over youth—such is the comic prevalence of custom—are kindly allowed, while the claims of his sister deity are sternly denied, and her little son Cupid, unless demurely clad, cap and gown and breeches complete, for such high festivals as Eights Week, is severely suspect. Who knows, however, what little entries the sly boy makes and with what results? Occasionally too one has been forcibly reminded of Juvenal's pertinent inquiry, "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" though the lives led by the majority are almost too far beyond moral reproach. But to Bacchus many a libation is poured with the full approval of the Olympians. It is a significant fact upon which a folio treatise could be written, so exemplary is it of the national character, that a man who was caught kissing a girl, however pretty, on Magdalen Bridge on successive May mornings would run grave risk of being sent down, though the Master and all the dons will sit quietly, if perhaps a little timorously, in their rooms, while half the college is more or less uproariously under the sway of Bacchus. Leave is asked and easily obtained for a bump supper or a "twenty-firster"; but leave is never, never asked by the votaries of his sister goddess. Our friend would

not have noticed this odd discrepancy, so natural did it appear to him, had not a German he knew commented upon it. At the moment of comment he stoutly maintained, feeling the suspicion of a sneer lurking in the comment, the rightness of the distinction, but it remained in his mind and slowly spread out vistas for thought to traverse, and often over very difficult ground.

He thought, for instance, of the long summer afternoons and evenings which he had spent dancing at Maria Springs and walking in the woods among which it stands. Maria Springs is five miles from Göttingen at the foot of wooded hills. There is a café and a large wood-planked platform has been erected for dancing. The beauty of the place has not been spoiled. Rough terraces have been cut up the hill-side, on which are benches and tables. There, on Wednesdays, the professors' daughters, the élite of the town, and many students come about tea-time ; on Sundays the *Mädchen* and village girls come and many more students. On both days there is the same lack of ceremony. You sweep off your hat to anybody with a *Darf ich,* and if she consents away you waltz, and she usually does consent. Everyone is happy and laughing. And on Sundays

there is even more laughter and everyone is even happier.

Perhaps it is owing to the eye of authority which he feels fixed on him in his wildest moments, that the undergraduate is more inclined than the student to be self-conscious in his pleasures. And then too he has on all occasions to cope with a demon, who does not so terribly bother his brother, the student. That demon is the "right thing," which it is essential he should not only know but do. What the "right thing" exactly is, it takes more than instinct to tell you, and yet instinct most infallibly tells you when you have done the wrong thing. It is nothing definite enough, this right thing, to be expressed in definite words. It hovers in the air, and forms a perfect halo round some men, the light from which seems to show up the failings of other men. It is an attitude which you ought to take; it controls your movements in a room, your nod at meeting an acquaintance, your speech, your opinions, your tweed jacket and the buttons on it; it throws a shadow over every detail of your everyday existence, from your conduct in the common bath-room to your behaviour when unjustly sconced in Hall. Our friend, remembering this demon—the foster-child of long

years of public school and 'Varsity tradition, who changes his attack from year to year—wondered that he had emerged from the ordeal imposed by his pervading and awful power as successfully as he had managed to do. This demon has it every way. For if you submit too closely to his mandates they cling to you, like habits, and your future life is ruined by the charge of possessing the Oxford manner. There certainly the student scored. At Göttingen that demon existed only as a *lustiger Geselle* who shouted *Willst du alles mitthun?* and led the way, dancing like a will-o'-the-wisp, to the most fantastic fun.

§ 6.

That word "twenty-firster" roused many twinkling memories in our industrious friend's mind. Now it happens that men usually go into residence when they are about nineteen years old, so that in their second year they often come of age and celebrate the event by a dinner-party, which is sometimes held in their rooms in college, but more often at a club or a restaurant. To the dinner the man's most intimate friends are invited to the number of twelve or sixteen, but promiscuous invitations are given to all and sundry to look in at

the "after." The guests assemble in immaculate evening-dress, and at first, under the influence of the familiar demon, are embarrassed to meet each other in the ceremonial garb of a function, and the position remains difficult until champagne, which most properly flows, makes the difficult places smoother. It is helped by the photograph, which is taken as they sit round the table. The flashlight process on these occasions is apt to produce thick fumes, and on odours the conversation starts and grows to wit and animation. But with the end of dinner the fun begins to be furious. The dress coats of the diners are changed for blazers and the "after" begins. The centre of the room is cleared; men waltz happily together; songs are sung; things happen. One was young then. Ye Gods, how young! Our friend sighed, but his sigh soon turned to a chuckle at remembered absurdities. One especially. On one of these occasions, just when a mad gallop had stopped, and all the men were gasping for breath in every stage of dress and undress, there came into the room a man faultlessly dressed in dittoes. He could not immediately catch the hilarious note of the party, though he was warmly welcomed by the host; and he stood by the mantelpiece rather awk-

wardly. The order of his clothes and hair was in too great contrast to the disorder of the room and its occupants, and prevented him from feeling at ease. One of the diners (he came from another college) was just sober enough to realise the awkwardness of the man's position, and made his way in a bee-line across the room to his side. There he stood smiling at him. Then he carefully said, "Hullo, I always wanted to know you," and still smiling most innocently in his face, gently tapped the ashes of a large tobacco pipe out on the top of the immaculate head. The result was idiotically funny. It made the whole room shout with laughter, and the memory of it forced our friend to continue chuckling, even after the intruder had pointed out what a disgusting thing it was for one man to do to another. That was not the point. The look of surprise in the faces of the two men. . . . At length the intruder was obliged to smile, when he learned how speedily the damage was repaired with a hair-brush and how immediately the immaculate man entered into the very thick of the party. But for that occurrence he might have remained in the cold, who knows how long, and perhaps have gone away cheerless to spend the evening at work in a lonely room.

But these memories were mere "gurglings of triumphant jollity." Like escapades, they were better to remember than to experience. They helped to jog pleasantly that amiable, foolish desire, common to most men, of being able to think with a pregnant head-shake, "Ah ! what a fellow I was then !" They were mere flashes on the surface. The real substance lay much deeper, and was more intangible, like the difference between jollity and joy. A conglomeration of little things, each minute enough and unimportant enough in itself, made up the wonderful substance. There was not one thing which stood out and could be held up as the chief thing, like bathing or paddling on a seaside holiday or building castles in the sand. It was more than the opportunity of friendship, more than the long afternoons and evenings in early summer in a canoe on the Upper River, moving noiselessly through the water on a level with fields golden with king-cups and buttercups, from which larks rose singing into the dancing blue sky; it was more than the late nights of talk and quiet reading; more than the long walks over the hills and the return to one's own room in the old grey college; more than the laughter and the fun and the lectures and the meetings of various societies,

the tea-parties, the coffee-parties, the college meetings in the Junior Common Room (as the J.C.R. is never called), the wines, the games—it was all these things and far more, far more, that made those days so memorably happy as they were. Where to find in thought the secret of that life's insuperable charm, was sufficiently difficult; to catch the elusive secret and chain it with words was impossible.

"Simple enough," quoth the intruder. "You were young and foolish. You are middle-aged and sentimental. Would you now, honestly, if you had the chance, live through those days again?"

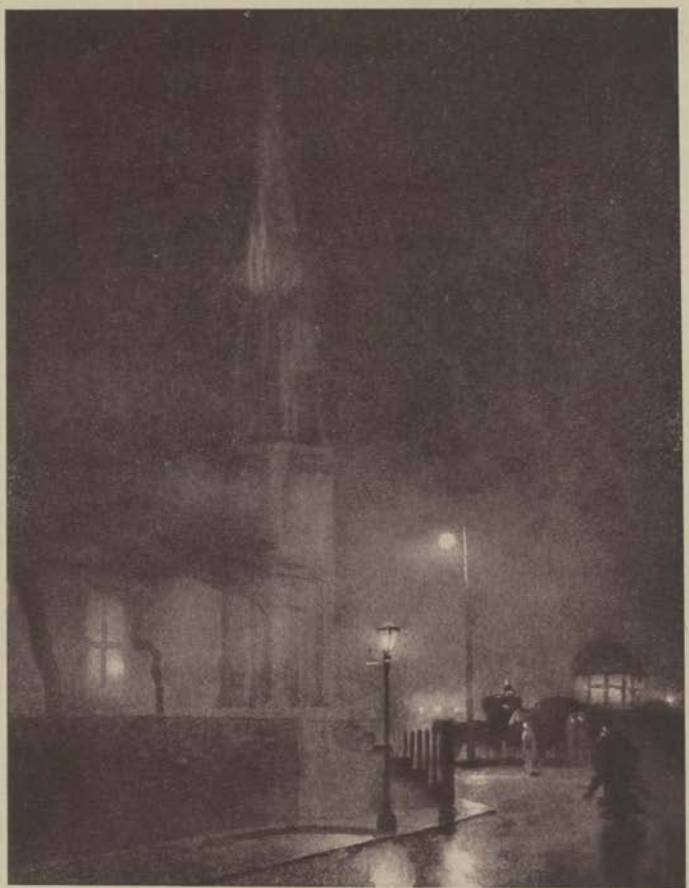
And our friend was obliged in honesty to confess that he would not. But that, he argued, proved nothing, certainly did not prove that the dark side of the picture was more real than the bright. It seldom is, as a matter of fact, in spite of your modern realist's asseverations to the contrary. Your modern realist, bless his kindly soul, is apt to air his megrims and tempers in order that his amiability and his affections may shine the more brightly in his family circle. You are inclined to expect some malignant, truculent personality to be lurking behind a fierce, destructive work, some bitter attack on women, or some treacherous, dreary

masterpiece in drab. What do you almost invariably find? No surly fellow, be sure, but a smiling, sensitive creature, longing for love; and in your simplicity you may be inclined to think that his work would be better and truer and bigger and more alive if it were to contain a little, just a little, of his own inherent good-heartedness, and a few, only a few, of his smiles. But he will still be for ever feeling that he is the symbol of the wrath of God to a sluggish generation; and moreover, joy—that is to say, the spirit of affirmation—it is far more difficult to express and takes a much bigger man to express, than gloom—that is to say, the spirit of negation.

"And Oxford?" sneered the intruder at our friend's wandering.

Then our friend lost his temper.

"I don't know," he shouted, "and I don't care. This I do know. I was happy there. So I learned instinctively that life was good if you knew how to live it. And by Heaven! I believe that's the best thing a boy can learn. Joy teaches him to mould life. Joy's twin sister is grief. But indifference, pettiness, miserableness, envy, sneering, are not of her family. Joy knows not those poisoners of the wells of Life."



MARTYRS' MEMORIAL

"Good," replied the intruder; and then to our friend's amazement the wild fellow flung his arms above his head and vehemently shouted again and again, "Hurrah! for the power of joy! Death to the Preachers of Death!"

§ 7.

"I may take it then that the Union is not a home for destitute dons?" said the persistent middle-aged woman who had buttonholed our kind-hearted friend. "I know now that the House is Christ Church, but I had got it so firmly into my poor head that the Union must be some kind of very intellectual poor-house, that the cold words of my guide-book, stating it is a Debating Society open to all members of the University, graduate or undergraduate, really seem to be without meaning. What with reading the Minority Poor Law Report and one thing and another, I am obliged to think it must be a Workhouse; or why is it called the Union?"

Our friend explained that it was a large club, where, after paying your subscription, you could write letters for nothing, obtain novels and books from a library, dine, and if you liked, debate Having given his explanation as

brusquely as courtesy permitted, he strode off with an abstracted look on his face, fearful lest he might be sucked down again into the whirlpool of another outpouring.

Certainly, the Union was a great institution, he thought, for those who desired to read modern novels or to become members of Parliament. It was the nursery of many a politician; and Oxford should certainly be proud of such a nursery, where so many statesmen had been suckled. Somehow it had never attracted our friend, as it ought to have attracted him. Perhaps it was not the dreary place it then seemed to him. Perhaps it would have been a good thing for him to have joined it and cultivated the art of rhetoric and public persuasion. He had been daunted too easily by a sad experience at the College Debating Society.

The sad experience was this. Late one Saturday evening a man, senior to him by one epoch-making year's residence, and President of the Society, had entered his room in a state of distress. There must be a meeting next evening, and he must have an opposer for his motion. Every note of entreaty was sounded from personal obligation, which did not exist to the right proportion, to public spirit and the good of the D.O.C. (that is, the Dear Old College).

Our friend had weakly yielded, and had vivid dreams of making an impassioned oration with overwhelming effect. But the day dawned and the evening drew on, and the moment came when the proposer cheerfully resumed his seat. He rose on unsteady knees, and embarked bravely. The first three sentences were short and he delivered them effectively; but the fourth sentence was long and grew longer and wound its coils round him like a large snake, strangling him. He tried to unwind himself by beginning again, which only made the muddle worse, and at last he was compelled, amidst cheers, ingloriously to sit down, comforted only by the thought of his delight if the minister of his childhood had dried up in this way at the opening of a forty minutes' discourse. Those dreadful moments of entanglement had prevented him from entering the Union without an unpleasant sensation of sinking in the pit of his stomach. He could not sit through any debate without feeling himself in the grip of a sinister power, luring him on to speak. Faintness at the prospect of speeches drove him out, on the rare occasions of his attendance, directly after private business was ended. It was amusing to hear the president parrying the absurd questions that it is the

custom to thrust at him at that period of the proceedings.

But Ladies' Day in Eights Week is the field-day for the president. Men sit up late many nights beforehand racking their brains to invent dreadful questions to bring down the laughter of the fair visitors upon him. One president, a man of cunning, devised a scheme to outwit the baiters. He himself made up beforehand two questions, to which he had prepared brilliant and crushing replies, and asked a friend, with whom he, being in his fourth year, lodged, to be so very kind as to ask them on the great day. Certainly; on one condition—that a third question would be allowed. Of course, of course, of course. The president acquiesced and was happy. He practised spontaneity, so that his capital replies might come out naturally as though on the spur of an inspired moment; he sang himself to sleep on the night before the eventful evening, dreamed of his triumph and awoke with a glad laugh. He was seen skirt-dancing with his little gown in the J.C.R.; he leant back at meals and slapped his knees in merry anticipation. The great hour at length arrived; the hall was packed; with difficulty, as he sat in the presidential chair, he kept a serious face and checked the

rising, preliminary chuckles. The first question was duly asked; and the house cheered the admirable answer. The second question was duly asked; and the house roared applause at the incomparable retort. Then amidst a listening silence the questioner rose, cleared his throat and in a cruelly distinct voice said, "Mr. President, what *was* the third question you asked me to ask you?" The house looked perplexed; then slowly the full significance of the dreadful inquiry was understood, and there was long, tumultuous laughter. The president's scarlet face was seen. His words were not heard, and a memorable private business came to its conclusion.

The Union is, numerically at any rate, by far the most important club in the University. But the ribbon of social life is The Club. That is the happy island to which the Bird leads the Blue. You do not put up for membership. An invitation to join drops from heaven upon you, and the invitation is an immense honour, to which everyone in his heart aspires, as men aspire to a knighthood. Its other name—one bates one's breath to mention it, like a profanation, as though one were to call a Bishop by his Christian name—its other name is Vincent's. Of its sacred precincts our friend knew nothing,

and he was sure that it must have been calumny that suggested it was the dullest place in Oxford.

A sort of cheerful little sister to this dignity is the Gridiron Club, known as the Grid, select without being too select. Here our friend spent some of the happiest evenings in his life, and here he had the best breakfast, after an early morning ride over Headington Hill, that he had ever enjoyed. So as he walked along the High past the Cornmarket he looked up wistfully at its long windows, and wondered whether the present generation were enjoying themselves as much as he had done. One evening especially over a bottle of Lafitte . . . that man had a genius for friendship . . .

§ 8.

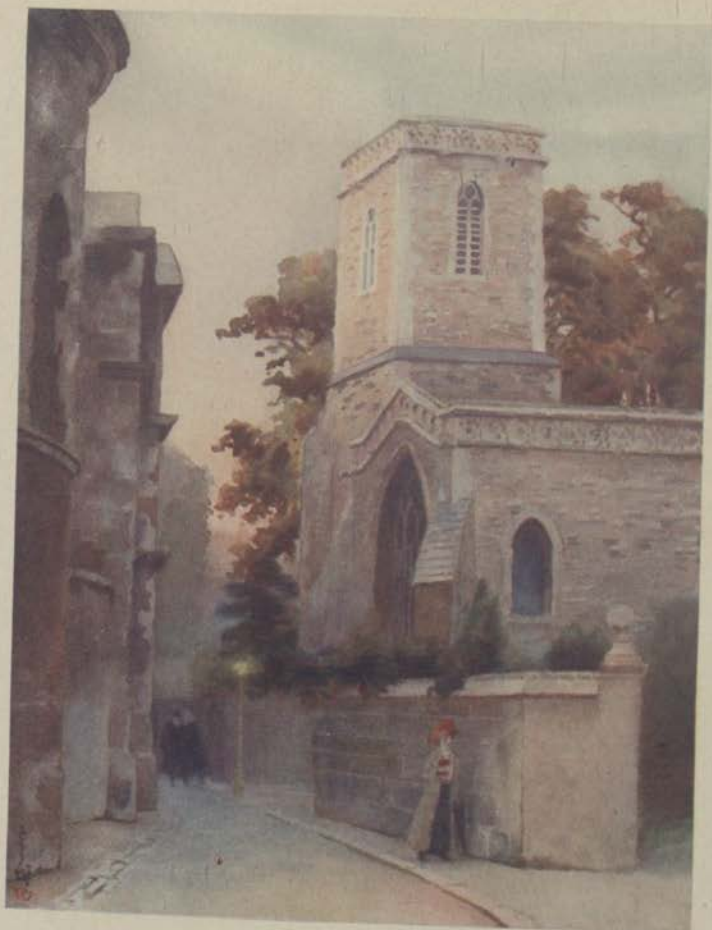
But the intruder jogged his elbow with an admonitory "Come, come, come!" scattering sad thoughts of the mysterious separating influences of life with his sharp jog, and suggested that it was about time in a disquisition upon the undergraduate's life to treat in some detail the examinations and work, the serious side, which would be uppermost in the mind of the careful parent. So our friend armed his pen with a new nib and his heart with new courage and with a sigh proceeded.

In Germany the system is superior. Your professor gives you a subject upon which nothing has been written and on that subject you write a treatise, as it is called, on which you quietly work for a year or so. You send it in due course, go through the ordeal of a terrific *vivâ*, in which the object is (as it should be) not to find out the extent of your ignorance, but the extent of your knowledge, and you become a doctor.

At Oxford everything is done by competitive examination, from which, it must be owned, our friend was physiologically averse. He sympathised deeply with the man who, after working for three years at his subject, was so unmanned (at the supreme moment) by the cold rows of wooden desks that he sat for four frightful minutes before blank sheets and then fled to the South of France and left the University in consequence without taking a degree.

There is no subject on which examination papers are not set, and the papers vary in searching intensity according as you feel equipped with brains and energy sufficient to face an Honour School or to slip through a Pass School; but in the latter alternative the gates of some colleges, such as Balliol, are closed against you. Most colleges like their

men to take at least one Honour School, unless their social standing or athletic ability makes them desirable for other reasons. A Blue is as efficacious as a First to procure a man a good mastership, games being rightly considered of extreme importance in a boy's upbringing. Much sarcasm is expended on this point, as though the fact that a man had been able to assimilate a large quantity of Greek or Latin or philosophy made it likely that he would have the power of imparting that knowledge to a class of boys. The teacher is born not made; he is, in other words, an artist, and the school of pedagogy is seeing to it that he has the chance of learning the technique of his art. *Mais revenons à nos moutons.* A man usually takes two years for his Moderations (Litteræ Humaniores need them) and two years for his Finals; and if he is going to be up only three years, he takes Pass Moderations and Honours in his Finals, be they a branch of Science or Mathematics or Law or History or English Language and Literature, or Greats, which perhaps is the most distinctive Oxford examination. Greats is well-named. For it embraces a knowledge of Western Philosophy and Greek and Roman History. Men who are anxious to go into the Home or Indian Civil Service



ST-PETER-IN-THE-EAST

and to whom the age limit is kind, usually pass a year in London at a cramming establishment, and of course everyone who has passed into the Indian Civil Service is sent up to one of the 'Varsities to study riding and his Oriental languages.

"Get on, get on!" growled the intruder; but our friend, like a dog on a lead, stiffened his paws and declined to budge. The subject appeared to him not only dull, but unimportant. However serious an affair an examination might be to certain men, the importance of examinations in the life of Oxford was little. Even the man who had gained two Firsts and a Fellowship had not gained in them the chiefest good that was to be gained at the place. That was not the most golden apple which the kind mother had it in her power to bestow, though that was probably the best material gift. He could not find words to express the most golden apple. But he felt instinctively that he himself had been given something more precious than any post could be, however good and however fixed the income from it might be; and he even went the sentimental length of feeling that no one who used the place for furthering his material ends could get what he had got. And he continued

to feel this in spite of the snorts of the intruder. The inestimable value of Oxford was that in the rushing of modern life, rushing that is mistermed advance and mistaken for vitality, it remained a place of quiet breathing, a beautiful place : that in these days of quick cleverness and journalism and hurried notions and crazes that masquerade as ideas, there remained a place where deep questions might still be treated in the deep deliberate way which any reverence for them demands.

"Anything is better than sleepy indifference," . . . but our friend put his hand over the intruder's mouth and went on with his line of thought until he wrote down with enthusiasm that there you might learn, if you would, how to tackle a big subject for yourself with the big reverence—that there you might learn how to learn; and no person or place or power can do more for a man than that.

§ 9.

Serious people should always be treated with suspicion, and never with greater suspicion than when they hold forth, as is their wont, against the predominance of games. Careful inquiry should be made into their amusements,

and if they have none their opinions must go to the wall as the opinions of bad artists in life. The inquiry should be careful, for certain deeply serious persons have private games which are more ludicrous and more entertaining than cricket or football or even bridge or golf, and over these private games they fiercely enjoy themselves. And just as there are people too serious against games, so there are people too serious about games, too serious especially after the game is finished. And it is, after all, the seriousness, whichever way it works, that is the abominable blight. There are so few subjects about which one does not learn most through laughter, one's self for instance. Those stock-jokes, however, love and alcohol, are exceptions; the one should be treated with long seriousness, the other with swift severity. So many lives have been wrecked by their misuse and could be brightened by their right use that for a generation or two time for a little serious thought to understand them might be perhaps spared from less enthralling things.

So mused our friend, as he brooded over 'Varsity Matches which he had seen played, in a mood serious enough to arouse the deepest suspicion, had not enthusiasm glowed underneath his gravity. And certainly there is no

game, except perhaps marbles or hop-skotch, in which teams from the rival Universities do not compete. Cricket is a good game—none better; but our friend after one experiment finally decided that it was not possible to watch cricket in a top-hat and tail-coat, and that he must be content in future to watch the Australians—in comfort. The most exciting contest was to our friend the Rugby Football Match, which is played at Queen's Club on the Wednesday or Saturday after term ends. Whether Rugby is a better game than Association is uncertain, but it is quite certain that Rugby is a better game to watch, unless tight scrums are in fashion and the ground is wet. More happens. There is a greater variety of attack. Any moment the surprising may change the aspect of the game. The whole body's agility is demanded. It is a fine sight to see a three-quarters brought down when he is at full speed, clean and low by the full-back, a still finer to see him swerve and score between the posts, and finest to see him pass in the nick of time, almost as he is tottering, to the backer-up, who races in. One match especially, as is generally the case, lived in his memory and the facts had probably grown in bouquet by being kept—like wine. On this occasion Cambridge

had, as the papers say, established a winning lead. So much so that certain Cambridge men, among whom our friend was sorely sitting, yawned and thought they had better go out before the crush. It was all over, easily over, except the shouting; they'd expected Oxford College would have put up a better game. But those forwards . . . ! and certainly the dark blue forwards seemed non-existent, a set of strays, that never even formed up. Suddenly however, the dark blue half, known with accuracy as the Pocket Hercules, was inspired. He nipped the ball up from the very feet of the Cambridge pack, handed the pack off like one man, and bolted. The Cambridge three-quarters were so surprised that they stared during the second he took to run through them; the full-back brought him heavily down, but not before he had hurled the ball across to the wing three-quarter who ran in and scored between the posts. The goal was kicked. Rather a good individual effort; pity they let him in, commented the Cantabs, who sat round our friend. The ball was kicked off, and the Oxford forwards took heart of grace sufficient to form up and show how immeasurably weaker they were. They were hustled about the field. But to the Pocket Hercules a little matter like

that was immaterial. All he wanted was a clear sight of the ball which he in three-quarters of a minute got, his forwards having again disappeared, pushed presumably into space. The ball was at the feet of the front rank of Cambridge forwards who had decided to dribble through and score quietly on their own. It was not to be. The Pocket Hercules made another magical plunge, picked up the ball as he leapt bang through the lot of them, upset with his impetus the amazed half-back into whom he landed, and like a madman ran, feinting to pass, right down the field and scored ten yards from the touch-line. The kick would at no time have been easy and was under the circumstances extremely difficult. It failed. Three minutes remained for play. They played. They played like demons; but the Pocket Hercules outdemoned the devil, and he started a movement (football and political parlance at times overlap) which ended in a dark blue three-quarter galloping in between the posts. The winning goal was kicked and the whistle sounded. The Cambridge men, who sat round our friend, he smiled to remember, had not been able to swear, not even softly under their breaths, and our friend himself after five minutes' stern applause had only voice enough to whisper

for an hour afterwards. Perhaps the beautiful embroidery, which memory can so cunningly bestow on facts, is the cause of the repetition, frequent among elder men (to the silent fury of the youngsters), of the phrase "Ah! those were the good old times." And the young one deserved his evening's unpopularity when he ventured to answer such a pious ejaculation with a sigh and the flippant, "And ah! for these the better new ones."

§ 10.

And why, the intruder was heard to growl, was not this enthusiasm directed to higher than physical things? And thereby proved himself a shallow-pate. It is in the nature of higher things to stalk singly on their way. They can never be organised and never be popular. Brotherhood, when organised, becomes something else. Moreover, a young man's body at twenty is fitter than it ever has been or ever will be to grapple with football; whereas a young man's mind at twenty is far from being fit to grapple with the problems of life and art. He is groping, or should be; for nothing is more perilous than a premature development. The very accuracy of the old young man's knowledge of some things trips

him into the abysmal error of thinking he knows all about everything. Then he loses reverence, and almost inevitably becomes embittered, and an embittered man of brains is an encumbrance. So it is the custom of youth to be shy of the things which really matter to them—especially in company. It is a proper custom, and one which, like many another good custom, can very easily be overdone and become mischievous.

Our friend remembered one instance of this enthusiasm, which he had completely shared. It occurred in a strange man of his year, who was apt to be rather aggressively unconventional in his views (none the worse on that account) and who had a passion for poetry. He stirred up other men to meet in various rooms once a fortnight for the purpose of reading poetry aloud. Several meetings took place with fair success, until a silent man, who spoke with a very soft voice, was induced to read, and chose beforehand, as the practice was, his poem, which happened to be "Tithonus." It came first on the programme at the meeting. Coffee was taken, as usual, before the proceedings, and then everyone settled themselves very solemnly in their chairs (and very comfortably) to listen. The requisite hush for the reading

was a little prolonged by the reader's hesitation, but he found his place, and began. He began to read in such a stentorian voice, "The woods decay, the woods decay," that the contrast to his own gentle-speaking voice was too great a surprise for his audience. Sides shook to aching in suppressed mirth. Then a yell of laughter broke up the proceedings, which ended, to the exultation of the Philistine, in a free cushion-fight.

Less embryonic clubs and societies, based on the undergraduate's enthusiasm for learning, exist in vast numbers, where papers are read and discussed upon literature, art, politics, philosophy, and every imaginable subject. The Oxford University Dramatic Society has a big and deserved reputation. The Musical Club makes Tuesday evenings memorable. The Horace Club publishes its Book of Poems, bound in neat white vellum. . . . Papers spring into being and flourish during the 'Varsity life of their originators—or even longer.

The classic example is *The Spirit Lamp*, of which Oscar Wilde was the genie. The first number appeared on Friday, May 6, 1892—twelve slight printed pages, which were worth their price of sixpence. It is the smallest and the wittiest paper that has ever been published

at the price. The Editorial, addressed to Members of the University, set forth its aims. "We offer to all and sell to our readers only a Periodical combining the advantages of good Print, good Grammar, and good Intentions. . . . In a University like this a paper should not, we think, aim at Originality. Truthfulness, Modesty and general Solidity are the virtues it may be expected to realise. We shall therefore be sparing of News, Invective and Puffs Poetical. To divulge an aim is to put a premium upon failure; otherwise we should hasten to add that to be Typical rather than Topical is our highest aspiration. It cannot be understood too early, nor repeated too often, that the views of the Editor . . . are profoundly Unpolitical, Unsocial, Illiterate and Unathletic. . . . His one desire is to deal (as fairly as possible) with the public, and to establish a new paper on a sound financial basis. An efficient staff has been engaged and the conduct of *The Spirit Lamp* has been distributed in four departments, viz., (1) Mild Criticism, (2) Really Sensible Articles, (3) Philosophy, (4) Other Light Literature. . . . It should be stated at the outset that *The Spirit Lamp* fears no kind of competition. When we have added that we appeal to the *enlightened*, the

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grounds of our self-confidence will be obvious to all."

At first it appeared once a week and the contributions were anonymous. Then it appeared in greater bulk and the name of the editor—Lord Alfred Douglas—was printed on the cover. It was really alive and often really amusing, though few things in it came up to the standard of its editorial. Those were the times when the pose of desperate wickedness was more in fashion than ever before or since, and in *The Spirit Lamp* that funny thing, known as decadence, finds its most perfect expression. To youth everything is pardonable.

> "Many a mad magenta minute
> Lights the lavender of life;
> Keran-Happuch at her spinet
> Psalms the scarlet song of strife:
> Keran-Happuch is my wife."

Serious verse in the same strain is not so effective, and of serious verse there are magenta examples. But it did the thing which many papers have tried and failed to do. It was witty—scrupulously witty.

Another characteristic venture, comically different from *The Spirit Lamp*, was *The Oxford Point of View*. It appeared twice a term in a fat form, in solid blue covers, and was earnest,

wisely trying in no way to rival *The Spirit Lamp* or the many flippant papers. Our friend was connected with the *O. P. V.* (of blessed memory) and remembered many editorial meetings, and their many grave disputes, as to which of the "views of those who come after" should be voiced in its pages. Varied views were expressed on varied subjects. Looking down the index of the first volume, he saw papers on The Decay of the Art of Acting, on The New Cathedral at Westminster, on Decimal Coinage, on Cambridge, on The Liberal Outlook, on Thoreau, on Oxford as a School of Journalism, and of course essays on The Extravagance of Economy and The Futility of Lectures were bound to appear.

The *Isis* with its Idols is a paying perennial. But atoms of the life of the place are reflected in its pages.

And all the phases of that life! The spirit seemed to our friend to evaporate from a mere enumeration. What day of all those days lived most vividly in his memory? 'Think as he would, no special day from the thick throng of happy days stood out to challenge comparison. It was a long good memory, which had forged a link between him and men in every quarter of the world.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

§ 1.

So our friend got into a morning train and left Oxford for his rooms in the Temple. The carriage in which he sat was full, but he managed to hold up before his industrious eyes a copy of Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days," which he had bought at the bookstall. He read some of the wonderful sketches of war-scenes—in the streets, in the hospital, on the battle-field—marvelling at the courage and power of the man who could give love and sympathy, as Whitman gave it, to the wounded; and then turned on to the last half of the book, in which the effect of such tremendous giving was seen on the man who gave. For Whitman had severe paralysis. His body could not bear the strain of those dreadful years, and succumbed; but his mind, his spirit, lived bravely on, and he writes of the peace and beauty of the quiet country in which for two years he was obliged to rest. The contrast between

the two parts of those "Specimen Days" was staggering. Our friend laid the book on his knee and looked in front of him. His eyes fell on the paper of the man opposite. A general election was imminent, and idly he scanned the photographs of a man who seemed to be delivering an impassioned speech. Above these pictures a movement of the paper in its reader's hand showed him printed in inch-big type the following amazing statement, "Socialism means no Government, no King, no God—darkness." Now, this was not a Socialist paper, unkindly quoting an opponent's words, which had slipped out on the spur of an unfortunate moment. It was an argument seriously and passionately advanced. Someone's deity of all the world, our friend most reverently thought, must be growing weak and old to be in need of such support; to say nothing of the monarchy and the government of England. Moreover, when he borrowed the paper, as he was soon afterwards obliged to do, he found to his amazement that, according to the orator, these men who threatened so mightily had the brains of hedge-pigs and the sneaking souls of swine (or words to that effect). Yet the orator seemed in mortal terror of them. The same anomaly was to be seen

often enough in the streets when two small boys fall foul of each other: as they meet, one or other is sure to be heard shouting abuse of his antagonist's parents or sister or brother, and the urchin who wastes his wind in abuse is generally drubbed. Abuse is the instinctive augury of defeat in the human animal. A general election is a general excuse for drunkenness; no tap is left unturned to secure a vote. All issues, however important, are obscured in an alcoholic muddle. The country is at its worst when it is electing its governors. And yet the ship goes clumsily forward, and all the hubbub matters very little. A few poets and scientists know the course it must take, and cheerfully give their lives to its service.

How to avert the rule of the ignorant, and to obtain a true aristocracy? that was the question. Much mischief spent itself by immediate expression, as a room is purified of foul air by open windows; and the air had an exhaustless power of assimilation. That was the reason why the halfpenny papers existed. They were as much blessings in disguise as open windows, however noisome the first foulness that issued from them might be. The orator could pin up the portraits and the tremendous heading in inch-big type by his

shaving-glass, and, cheered by the memory of his enormous statement, might be inspired to spend the remainder of his days in cheerful, genial, good works. Who knows, too, what mischief might not have been wrought upon him, if such an idea as that had been allowed to seethe on, unexpressed, in some obscure corner of his soul?

§ 2.

But these parties with their cries were of small relative importance. Not Socialists or Liberals or Unionists were the real enemies of mankind—to whichever side you might happen to belong—except in so far as they fostered prejudice. Far truer enemies were bacterial and protozoic parasites, which ravaged mankind with disease and pain and death.

The whereabouts of these foes have only been discovered during the last half-century, and the means to avert their power has still more lately been discovered. And yet the more they are kept in hand and checked, the more serious does another problem become—the problem of over-population. Gradually the realm of conjecture is lessening before the realm of knowledge. In physical matters there is no longer room for sentiment and

prejudice; experiment, proof, and ascertained fact were the stages. And yet when the scientist said—this is so, by this and that sure proof, the philosopher and the moralist were apt to say they preferred things to be as they were before. The old philosophies based on misconceptions must give way before new and live philosophies based on discovered facts. There was no antagonism between science and poetry or science and philosophy. Only the poet or the philosopher with imitative and without creative power was opposed to the discoveries of the scientist. The inert, who found it pleasanter and more respectable to cherish the misconceptions of their fathers, chose to be shocked and not inspired by new truths. The real poet was as enthralled by the new realms which were being opened out by the scientist, as the scientist himself. The real poet rejoiced that the possibilities of man's life were widening, and every new fact did not wither his spirit but strengthened the power of his imagination to take off into the Unknown.

Oxford, instead of being the home of lost causes, the dim and shadowy denial of life, wrapped in a melancholy beauty, must become the forcing-ground of the laughing future. Her beauty must glow with the sun of vitality.

She must not cling to the tradition of the past, as though both she and it were tottering in need of each other's support; but, inspired by what was noble in the past, must lead the country in humanity's slow march towards enlightenment and power. And what was the lesson of the past, other than that great men had been great by their faculty to live tremendously in the present and the future?

The historians taught their history; taught that every reformer had been received with obloquy and derision and had usually been punished by the people of his time as a subverter of morals. Surely the time had come when the meaning of that lesson should be at last learned, and more deeply than by the mere toleration of the new truth. The lesson, rightly learned, taught that the new truth should be welcomed and promulgated. A University like Oxford, magnificent with the prestige of tradition, was in the position to bear the odium, which was in the nature of things always attached to a new truth; to break down the barriers of prejudice; to attack the old limitations of right and wrong which stifled progress; to oppose the superstitions about the human body, which man for his own past safety's sake had been obliged to stereotype into morals. A

University like Oxford was in the position to influence the life of the nation, to forward the cause of humanity. Mere scholarship would slip into its proper place as a servant of the great cause. The chief business would be not so much to discover and know fresh little facts about ancient languages, as to make the present life fuller and stronger and more beautiful. The learned ones would slowly yield to the creating ones—men who could laugh and live and work, men who had great ideals of life and before whom life opened gaily out with new and ever varying possibilities, men who were not Preachers of Death, but Preachers of Life.

All this poured through our friend's mind in a few glad moments, swiftly as in a dream. He saw where the true aristocracy of the future might originate, men fit to give counsel to the nation. And his cheeks glowed with enthusiasm. But the paper had fallen on his knee and had caught the eye of an elderly gentleman who sat by his side, and at that moment remarked, "Very shocking, very shocking!"

The remark startled our friend from his dream, and not wishing to be drawn into a political discussion, he simply agreed.

"No country can be run without a god, you

know," the elderly gentleman added, and, clasping his fingers more tightly across his stomach, closed his eyes and relapsed more comfortably into his corner.

§ 3.

In the Temple our friend quietly reviewed the result of his special visit to Oxford. The first result, which he did not however observe, was a fusion between the industrious and the intruding elements in him. One scale was no longer weighed down so heavily with brooding over the memorable beauty of the place and its beautiful memories that the other scale kicked noisily into the air against its sleepy uselessness. The scales were balanced. The intruder was reincarnated by one of the mind's many subtle processes.

The exciting dream in the railway-carriage, started by the ridiculous headline and scattered by the complacent gentleman's comment thereon, though thus boxed up by absurdities, had not passed without leaving a fragrance behind it, and slowly materialised from the realm of dream to the realm of thought. Certainly no greenest shoot that danced towards the sky was more dependent on the great earth-buried roots

of the tree than a University is dependent upon the beauty and tradition of the past. In his day-dream he had eyed the greenest shoots with too exclusive a fondness. Their life was so apparent that it was easy for a moment to forget the strong life in the thick trunk and roots, to which they simply bore witness. He was not gardener enough to carry on the metaphor of the tree, allured as he was by fruits and graftings and other phenomena which vaguely appeared to carry out his point. He was content to remember that a trunk was not dead because it was hard and black, and that a shoot could not live by itself, however green with new life it might appear. His contentment, however, grew to such pleasure before he went on that he resolved to buy a book on tree-culture.

He went on to discover (for his own enlightenment) what were the new signs of life, and what these signs implied. Three things immediately rose in his mind and startled him like snipe on a marsh; and each disappeared into the Unknown beyond the ken of his imagination. The first was the fact of the education of women; the second was the fact of the growth of interest in science; and the third was the fact of the Rhodes scholarships.

All three facts were fraught with significance. The first two had evolved out of the far-reaching spirit of the age, and their birth had been helped by the determined effort of many wise men and women. The third was the idea of one man. It was a great idea, but it was necessarily forced a little too violently upon the place for its excellence to be manifested by its immediate working. Ideas appeal to the imagination in exact proportion to the amount of vitality which they contain, and this idea of Cecil Rhodes must appeal strongly to any unwarped imagination. It attacked the thorny prejudice of nationality; and suggested an ideal of patriotism higher than the barbarous ideal of shouting and warfare and slaughter, by which the world was no better than a fowl-run, and nations to prove their superiority must fight like rival roosters. Here was an augury of the day when men would laugh at the confusion of peace with sloth and cowardice; when disease and indifference and ignorance and prejudice would be recognised as the foes against which it was worth while fighting to the death, because they only called out to the full all a man's courage, all a man's intelligence. Science had shown that man had evolved from the ape, and science still cried out that evolution cannot stop: that

there are unplumbed possibilities for man's life, as far above his present state as man is now above a monkey. His will must be stirred by love and hope and enthusiasm to realise that he has only taken a few faltering steps into his kingdom. He must have the courage—to know.

§ 4.

No wonder that the idea which brought into being the Rhodes scholarships set our friend's imagination on fire. He found it was exciting to live when great things were actually being conceived and done. Stupidity (one's own especially) was so continually in evidence and kept slapping one's face, like a flapping ribbon in the wind, that it made the recognition of a great, good, intelligent idea particularly refreshing and pleasant. There was no detrimental person there to shrug the shoulder at his visions or to pat his back in kindly pity at his enthusiasm; in consequence, he felt articulate against every objection. "There were in residence during the Academic year 1908-1909 no fewer than 179 men. Of these 78 were from the Colonies of the Empire, 90 from the United States, and 11 from Germany." He chuckled at the good facts. No objection could

lessen their store of significance. Now more than ever before in the history of the race the wise man was obliged to look forward into the future, and to look but warily into the past, because the conditions of modern life (especially the ease of transit and communication) made the problems of modern life so different from the problems of the past, that a keen imagination rather than a stored memory was the right tool with which to tackle them. Higher ideals and truer values were becoming more and more necessary, as the scope of man's power widened.

Our friend pulled up his thoughts (so inclined to be runaways) to inspect more closely the second great fact, which was the development of science in Oxford. Timidly he approached the subject, because for a long time he had been under the prevalent delusion that science and poetry were antagonistic in some mysterious and quite fundamental way; and the cloud of that delusion was not so far on his horizon but that it still left a shadow of shame on his mind. And the shadow was all the darker that he had been inclined to forget the boy who turned his rooms at Univ : into a laboratory and became one of the world's poets, who wrote :—

" He gave man speech and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the Universe:

And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven
Which shook but fell not; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself out in all-prophetic song."

Shelley used thrones as symbols of ignorance and prejudice. He saw science attacking the walls of ignorance like a battering-ram, while poetry, the voice of the imagination, was inspired by the conflict.

Since Shelley's day the advance in knowledge was unparalleled. During the last fifty years his great prophecy seemed to be moving towards fnlfilment:

"The earth does like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn."

Shelley died in 1823. In 1836 Philip Duncan, the Curator of what was then the Museum, explaining in his catalogue the arrangement of his specimens wrote, "The first division proposes to familiarise the eye to those relations of all natural objects which form the basis of the argument in Dr. Paley's 'Natural Theology.'"

In the *Times* of May 17, 1903, Professor Ray Lankester quoted Lord Kelvin's statement, "That, though inorganic phenomena do not do so, yet the phenomena of such living things as a sprig of moss, a microbe, a living animal—looked at and considered as matters of scientific

investigation—compel us to conclude that there is scientific reason for believing in the existence of a creative and directive power." The ghost of Paley would shudder to think that such a statement should ever be necessary. But Professor Ray Lankester went on to state, "So far as I have been able to ascertain, after many years in which these matters have engaged my attention, there is no relation, in the sense of a connection or influence between science and religion." And his whole lucid statement of the position printed at length in the *Times* showed how science had, from being like an infant tutored by theology, advanced to its own independence; that dogma and prejudice were its enemies, however much they might hide under the skirts of religion. The difference of attitude exhibited in these two statements amazed our friend: it seemed incredible that they could have been made almost within the little span of one man's life.

What had actually taken place in those years was even more amazing. Man seemed suddenly to have taken many strides forward in his advance from the monkey. The discovery of the Röntgen rays, of the new chemical element Radium, of germs and of the means by which to render their attacks harmless, and discoveries

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in every branch of science,* far too numerous to mention, were being made by men all over the world. Scientists of every nationality were working to advance man's knowledge of Nature, and by them a new bond between nations was being established—against ignorance, the arch-enemy of the human race.

And at Oxford? The advance there had been great, but not sufficiently great to keep proper pace with the huge advance that science itself had made. Here was an immense opportunity for the University, of which she had not availed herself with alacrity sufficient to satisfy her most ardent followers. There was still a survival of the classical boy's superiority of attitude towards "stinks," dating from the time when a smattering of the classics was considered part of a gentleman's outfit.

Our friend had felt that superiority keenly in the days of his youth. Wisely enough, it had been the custom at his school for every boy on the classical side at an early stage in his career to submit for two hours a week to chemistry lessons, in case there might be in him an unsuspected genius for scientific work. He was as incapable at that time of under-

* See "The Kingdom of Man," by E. Ray Lankester, a book for every poet.

standing the simplest experiment as he remained incapable of ever solving a rider in Euclid, and his incapacity—naturally, he now realised—increased his superiority, which was merely, as in fact it usually is, a defence againt weakness. The history of his own attitude towards science seemed to be rather typical. He felt in himself, without undue conceit, a tiny reflection of the changes in attitude that were happening in the world. His superiority lapsed into indifference, and his indifference was whipped into animosity by the fact that a friend (a little recklessly) proved that his most cherished ideas were foolish in the light of science. His ideas were strong and real to him, even though his income was in no way dependent upon their tenure, so he set to work to test them and to examine this light of science to the best of his ability. And though his mind remained constitutionally incapable of following the process by which science worked to the incontrovertible result, the results themselves roused keen interest in him. He found that his own ideas were widened and strengthened, and that his antagonist had used a wrong weapon against him.

All four stages—of superiority, of indifference, of animosity, of enthusiasm—were being illus-

trated, it seemed to him, in a striking manner at Oxford.

§ 5.

Much acrimony was being vented upon her. There was every sign that she was entering upon a new phase in her career. On every hand a fundamental question was being raised which fifty years ago would have been regarded as too elementary to be met with anything but ridicule—the question what the nature of education precisely was. Not the least part of the debt owed to the growth of the scientific spirit was exactly this fuss about a fundamental question. For in consequence of it she was striving to become articulate about her position.

The struggle centred round what seemed at first a trivial issue—namely, whether Greek should be a compulsory subject in the entrance examination to the University. The scientists fell upon Greek as the chief encumbrance in the way of progress. Why should a man with talent enough to obtain a scholarship in science waste his time in acquiring the rudiments of a dead language which he would never look at again after the ridiculous little examination? It was on the face of it preposterous. More-

over, Oxford influenced the whole system of teaching in all the leading public schools in the country. Take the case of many a boy of average ability. The bias given by the University to the study of dead languages would be sufficient to influence him to become a moderate composer of Greek verse and Latin prose, and to spend his life in handing on his moderate acquirements, as a schoolmaster, to others; whereas, if the bias were towards science, he would be able, with his average abilities, to work out one of the innumerable little problems which help towards the eradication of some disease, or the discovery of some new fact. Science pointed to an enormous field waiting for workers, while men were still employed in retailing this useless information—this classical education.

That was the new voice which spoke against the old order, just as the last new voice spoke against the system of Dotheboys Hall. And the immense advance, since necessity had produced that last new voice, became overwhelmingly apparent to our friend. That was at the very beginnings of any interest in education at all. And what had happened since then? A vast system of education had been organised over the entire country. Schools of every kind,

and consequently teachers of every kind, existed in profusion. The problem had changed. For a big majority education had come to mean simply how a boy could most speedily be made fit to gain a salaried position—be made, in other words, marketable.

The opponents of the new claim raised by science based their objections on this point; and obscured the issue by confusing (a little wilfully and quite naturally) the claims of science with the claims of the market. The issue was further obscured by the retort of some scientists that the objectors' opinions were chiefly based on the fear that their own positions and incomes might be affected, if any change in the system of education were begun. And the climax was put to the confusion by a loud-voiced politician who declared that education did in fact simply mean—the giving of a marketable value to a boy, and that if Oxford were not made "up-to-date" she would rapidly be ousted in the competition for existence by other more modern establishments. And round the teaching of Greek the battle raged, and the teaching of Greek became a strategical point of as great importance as the famous farm at Waterloo.

§ 6.

That such a battle was being contested at all delighted our friend; it proved that a keen interest was being taken in one of the most important matters in life. But like many another, he took the extreme liberty of having his own view of the case. It probably coincided with that of many others, though of this he was not certain; he might easily have missed some of the many pronouncements in the controversy, and have misunderstood others.

The important point was that education now touched more lives than ever before in the history of the nation, and that the necessities of the greater number forced them to regard education only as a means of livelihood. Education was very properly looked upon as a right and not as a luxury. That view was a great gain to the community, but therein precisely lay the immediate danger. Our friend, casting about in his mind for the means to express his meaning, remembered an occurrence, of which he had read, and which now seemed nicely parallel with his idea. The passage told of the ruin of a certain city and ran so far as he could remember as follows:

A certain little city was supplied with drink-

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ing-water by a reservoir built round a spring, which stood on a slight eminence in a wide plain outside the city. It happened that one year the reservoir overflowed. No one knew the cause of the overflow, but the result was a harvest of great richness, which overjoyed the hearts of the farmers in the plain. With difficulty they persuaded the magnates of the city, who disliked change, to lower the walls of the reservoir in order to facilitate the overflow when the spring rose. For a few years they enjoyed prosperity, but the time came when they grew discontented with the restrictions imposed on the spring, the source of their prosperity, and did away with the wall entirely, that it might flow with perfect freedom, as they said, over all the land. They were disappointed, however, in the result of their scheme, for the result proved, in spite of their efforts, to be a swamp in the spring's vicinity and then extensive dryness.

That was all. The story was related by an ancient historian as an argument against innovation. Our friend, at the time he read it, thought it such a bad argument that it had stuck in his memory. But it seemed strangely applicable to the present position in education. Let the men in the plains take the life-giving

water as much as possible for their own uses, but no stone of the wall enclosing the reservoir must be removed. Let the standard of knowledge be first lowered and finally lost, then a muddy swamp and extensive dryness must be the inevitable result.

Let the walls rather be raised and the water purified. Nor was this reservoir fed by one spring only. What the nation needed was not an easier approach to half-culture, but that the strength and severity of genuine culture should be realised, that a place should exist where the ideal of this genuine culture was cherished, and so grew ever higher and more difficult to attain. Now more than ever was there a high standard of genuine culture necessary because of the increased and increasing number of the half-educated. The half-educated man is prone to think that he knows everything. He cannot face what he thinks is a return to the darkness from which he has partially emerged. He is apt to have just enough knowledge to be afraid of more. So the diffusers of knowledge must face the Comic fact that they are, of necessity, helping to create the prejudice which it is their chief duty to combat.

§ 7.

The University, our friend thought, must use all her strength and vitality to keep this standard high. And that end could not be gained either by a withdrawal from past knowledge or by the exclusion of new knowledge. The original idea of Walter de Merton remained as true for to-day, as it was true for his time. His idea was to found a priesthood of learning, unhampered by any duties or obligations other than the great duties incurred by the pursuit of learning.

The danger of learning was that it should lapse into pedantry, which is dry and pernicious. But the way to avert that danger was not to destroy learning, but to heighten and vivify it. To turn away from science because it happened to be in some cases commercially useful, and because fools advocated its utility, was as short-sighted a policy as to cling to classical learning because it happened to be commercially useless and because fools advocated its uselessness. The bigger view was the right view. Science should be welcomed as any new life should be welcomed, and classical learning should gather all its strength to welcome it fitly, and bravely to establish it. And

behind the hubbub our friend saw with excitement that this was slowly being done. He read again the impressive speech of the Vice-Chancellor at the fiftieth anniversary of the Museum: "What I should like to see is the classical and the literary, the philosophical and the theological student, more affected by science. . . . I hope the next era will see, not the decay or the obliteration of the old traditions, but the addition of the new." It was well said and at a good time.

For the old and the new must be united by the welding vigour of the imagination—that flower of vitality.

§ 8.

Then the other beautiful shadow passed before our friend's mind, fragrant of future possibilities, and of present new life. It stirred his fancy. Its origin came within his own experience. What did it bode for the welfare of the community? What did it presage for the good of man? Often our friend had heard his mother refer to the days when she was a girl, and no one dreamed of giving a girl education. Now there were High Schools all over the kingdom, and the women's colleges at Oxford were rapidly extending their premises.

Here was no fitful movement, doomed to an early end. Here was a strong new growth of life, which struck right down into the core of the nation. Our friend's fancy leapt to welcome the vision of intelligent women, the mates for intelligent men to woo; and a little overleapt the mark, so that it staggered before the other vision, swift to rise, of the woman who tried to ape man in manners and every habiliment, and swelled the ranks of that dreadful "troisième sexe," which is nothing. But not for long did his fancy waver. The bad vision grinned and vanished. Knowledge helped a man or woman to independence—that is to say made a man more of a man, and a woman more of a woman. The chivalry, that cloaked the manners of the market, was doomed—with its deceit and its lust and its selfishness. A good, true chivalry, born of laughter and independence, was taking its place. With independence love became possible between man and woman; and the union of man and woman became something higher than the all-too-common union of the money-master and his domestic drudge. Then the great Comic Spirit dances gravely to life, for then the conflict is keener and more joyous, less pompous and less servile. What were those words? He found them and read with renewed

pleasure: "There has been fun in Bagdad. But there never will be civilisation where Comedy is not possible; and that comes of some degree of equality of the sexes. . . . Where women are on the road to an equal footing with men, in attainments and in liberty —in what they have won for themselves, and what has been granted them by a fair civilisation—there, and only waiting to be transplanted from life to the stage, or the novel, or the poem, pure Comedy flourishes, and is, as it would help them to be, the sweetest of diversions, the wisest of delightful companions."

The words should be pinned by any bed in which a too solemn politician or too staid a don was likely to sleep; he might be induced to pray that the spirit of laughter should enter and transform his serious soul, and the prayer might even be answered.

Our friend's thoughts nimbly hurried to the good time when the pedant should be no more than a kindly-preserved relic, banished with his heaviness from the community, or changed beyond recognition to liveliness.

Slowly the sound of grave laughter was growing on the horizon, and the new life was rustling ever nearer to the cobwebbed recesses of his old-tomed library. Its sad occupant

turned in uneasy dread of the time when learning and laughter must be combined, when a scholar, to hold his own, must be something more than a receptacle of fact, must be in fact a living, laughing man. Ah ! then the learned yearling will cast about for a means to stand firmly on his feet, and with a supreme effort—strong enough to take him clean out of his talented self—he will find a living woman and learn to laugh and be young. The lion, the eagle, and the child—those were the three stages in the development of the man that was to be, as the great poet said who tested a philosopher by his laugh.

Nor could our friend's glee at the prospect be termed trivial by any but the shallow. It is true that as yet this new presence in Oxford is hardly noticeable—except for a few new buildings and an increase in the attendance at lectures. But the atmosphere of the place is being gradually quickened and refreshed. The power of the agelast was on the decline. The note rang truer and more gaily.

And then a speculation of great and Thelemite interest rose in our friend's mind. The monastic ideal was prevalent as late as the middle of last century. It was thought that marriage unfitted a man for the duties of don

and professor. The same idea seemed prevalent in the women's colleges—with a little more reason. Learning, at any rate as a profession, was the privilege of the spinster. Our friend wondered how soon the essential falseness of the position would become manifest, and how long the false shame about such beautiful matters as love and motherhood would endure. A very little while, he was confident. It would soon be seen that the duties did not clash. It would soon be seen that the ideal of motherhood as an uncontrollable instinct and of learning as a sort of self-immolation were low ideals; and they would be superseded by a bigger and a higher ideal, which would produce its own type of woman.

These new influences of the growth of science and of the education of women were without any doubt working towards the same end, and that end was the revitalisation of the University. The pursuit of knowledge was becoming less and less isolated from the great facts of life. The pursuit of knowledge was becoming more and more a living, laughing thing.

§ 9.

Then our friend went to bed, for it was very late. And that night he had a long, clear dream of the dream-city, to which the boy looks forward and the old man looks back—with love. Hidden among the legends is the dim figure of St. Frideswythe, whose nunnery was the first settlement, and elusive as the sainted lady herself is the spirit of the old city. That spirit whispers of the beauty of old buildings, set between hills in a river-pierced valley; of the dignity of tradition; of the memory of great lives lived to the glory of knowledge; of the joy of youth present at its rosiest bloom through the centuries. Stare, and the spirit escapes, for she is fugitive: look with reverence, and the beauty of her features, made sacred by Time, is revealed to you, for she is kind.

And in his dream he came to a long, narrow room. The ceiling was low, and across it ran big irregular beams. The fireplace was wide and open. Before the fireplace stood a woman with hair that shone in the firelight. She was expecting him. He knew her well, but who she was he could not say. She began to speak: her voice was soft and musical. She said:

"After many changes and much distress men will at last turn to me for guidance, and with my sons the aristocracy of learning will be inaugurated. My University will then be above and apart from the State. The State must work for the nation, but I must work for humanity. The power of wisdom must shine forth above the quarrellings of men and nations, and show by its light how low is the standard of material interest. My sons will not measure life by their own little span of existence. My sons will be of the time, yet above it. They will work, and their work, like that of other great artists, must be universal. And they will remain young-hearted. Laughter will be more often heard among the people, for they will then have scope for their instinct of loyalty to the rule of genius."

"You are the Sainted Lady, you are the . . ." he began to say.

But everything grew dark and he awoke.

§ 10.

In the morning our friend began to write his book. He wished very much to dedicate it to his brother, who was Professor of English Literature at Birmingham University, and to whose love and interest it was due that he had

ever been able to go "up" to Oxford. But he hesitated a little before doing so. It set such a tremendous standard before him. Not that he at all looked upon it as any kind of return; but even to make a memento at all worthy of such a deed was beyond his powers. However, he decided he would. And he did. And he said that he was far from wishing to be free from that obligation; but on the contrary, that he took joy in the knowledge of its permanent survival.

So, scrumpling up the top-sheet (a little dusty now) on which that one fell word was written, he wrote on the clean next sheet, "With my love, Denning, to you," and set gaily to work—to do the best he could.

A NOTE BY THE ARTIST

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OXFORD! The very name I knew long time before I studied the Universal Geography, and many ages before I learnt the A B C. All those great professors of New Japan were either from Oxford or from Cambridge. I thought in my babyish mind that it must be the most important and the most wonderful place in the world—the everlasting spring, whence all sorts of knowledge are incessantly streaming out. Indeed, Oxford to me was just like Rome to the Catholic people. Although I had such a great homage to Oxford, I had no chance to visit it during my thirteen years' stay in London. It is not far enough from London to make any excuse; but the truth is, I didn't think it so necessary to pay visit there, because I can meet with the Oxfords wherever I go, not only in England but even in the Far East, too.

The Oxfords are the candles to give light all over the world, and I have been benefited with these candles' light so much. So many of my illustrious friends are the Oxfords. At last I had to be exiled to Oxford by my publishers in order to make a book.

OXFORD

Just before I started to Oxford, one of my Oxfords threatened me, saying, "If you don't love Oxford, our friendship shall be finished!" I asked him whether he meant about the college people, or the view. He said, "The Views." I could not take this seriously, though it would be a great pain for me to lose such a friend. It is quite natural that when one loves a woman, her nickel watch often seems to him a platina one. I decided to see Oxford from the point of view merely of art, and not of heart. I kept the equilibrium in my heart fairly well to be a good judge on art. Now, after three months' stay there, let me write my answer to that friend of mine as well as to all the readers of this book.

When our train approached near to the station, and I saw from the train window the first glimpse of all those pinnacles, domes, and towers, I was so excited. Those dignified Gothics were such a treat to me after being in Rome. Although I loved Rome with all my heart, I was starving for Gothic there. Now, Oxford was such a complement to me. For the first few days, I was quite mad with the joy of sightseeing those magnificent quadrangles, corridors, towers, walls, and old pavements, cracked like turtle-backs. Of course I had an anticipation before I saw Oxford, that it must not be quite the same with other English provincial towns, where so many chimneys are puffing thick volumes of smoke, scattering those dirty black soots all over our collars, cuffs, and

faces; because chimneys are not needed to manufacture the professors. It was not only my anticipation was realised, but I did not see "stove-pipes" either, and I was so grateful, as I cannot make out much art from the stove-pipes. Everything was so different and so original. I could not feel I was in England until I noticed the crowds in the street. They were regular Britons, with whom I have been so familiar for nearly half of my life. I thought they were far more Briton than the Londoners.

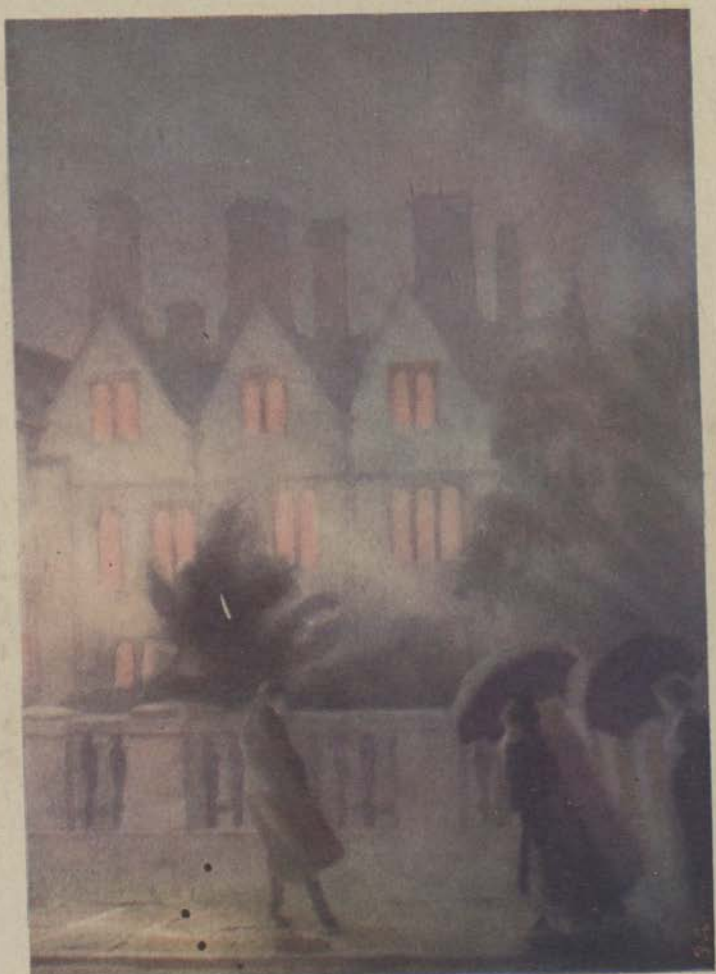
In the spring of 1908 I was in Paris. It was raining and raining and raining. All my French friends told that it was "quite exceptional weather," which they experienced only once in thirteen years, or thirty years (I forget what they said exactly). Last winter I was in Rome. We had plenty rain there again. All my Italian friends told me that was "quite exceptional weather," again! This time in Oxford we had twenty-seven rainy days in one month! But the people down there told me that was "quite the ordinary weather" of Oxford, and I was so glad to meet with the ordinary weather of the place at last! Nevertheless, Oxford people were grumbling at the weather like anything! I was rather surprised to see the Christians should complain so much against their God. But let them be Christians or Pagans, it is the human nature to find out something always to grumble at, and if they grumble about nothing but the weather, that proves their life must be easy and

comfortable. I was so pleased to come back once more to the peaceful England.

As for myself, I have so many things to think more urgent than the weather. Beside, I often prefer the rainy day. Its effect is so nice for pictures. But the rain in Oxford was something extraordinary. Its dampness! Its effect on my poor rheumatism!

I shall not endeavour to write about this with my "unexpert" English (I have lately learnt that word "unexpert" from some kind criticism in English papers) because I am so afraid to minimise the reality of that uncomfortable effect which I experienced in Oxford. Look at all those old buildings there! Each stone has got such terrible Rheumatism. And we artists or poets enjoy ourselves to look at them, and we give all our hearts to them. Only if those stones could speak, they would grumble much. I think it is not only about the stone, but everything in this world is in the same way. Great sufferers always win the hearts of the world. Look at "Evangeline." I myself often think that the easier life is more preferable than "Fame."

Now I must write about the place where I stayed. One of my very intimate friends, Mr. W., an "Oxford," took me to Oxford on the first day. He was so kind to find out a diggings there for me. It was raining, hailing, and thundering. Our cab-horse was so frightened and he so wildly danced, I was afraid that we might be thrown off.



MAGDALEN IN THE RAIN

Mr. W. had a long list of the addresses of diggings. At each door, I had to stay inside the cab while he was inquiring. Every time when he came out, he shook his head, saying, "Engaged, engaged," and "Engaged." Every one of them was engaged by some undergraduates. I lost all my patience. I said I would give up this job, and come back to London at once. But as Mr. W. is so closely connected with my publishers, he insisted to "succeed" with my digging. After going round about the city several times, we had a drive to Iffley Road, and there I was installed at last. It was a one-side street, and the house faced to the football ground. From my window I could see a vast green field with many trees. During my ten weeks' stay in Oxford those trees were my only friends. I had nobody to talk to, so it was consolation to look at those trees, and I have quite fallen into love with them after all. I have never painted trees before because I had no love for them. How could one fall in love with those trees in Parks? They behave themselves too aristocratic, and they are too cool to woo. The country trees are quite different. I must confess that Oxford trees were not my very first love. Last summer I was invited to Sainte Colombe (a little town of Seine et Marne in France). I saw most fascinating trees all round the house of my hostess. They were exactly like Corot's trees. It was a great temptation for me to devote my

heart to them. But the hostess of the house was very kind to me. I could not be so impolite to turn my face from her in order to look at those trees through the window. It was my great reluctance. This time in Oxford, unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I had no human friend, and I have succeeded to make love with trees. Many thanks to Oxford!

The "terms" started a few days after I went to Oxford, and the undergraduates began the football match on that ground three or four times in a week (I forget how many times, as I had no calendar in my room). For the games, rain was absolutely disregarded. I often observed that dead-heat match under the pouring rain, and the audience were as many as in the fine weather—most of them without umbrellas. The applauding voices echo to the valley. There was something beyond the game itself. May I call it the Samurai-spirit of the Britons? I was very much inspired by it, and it deepened my admiration and fondness of Britons even more. This Samurai-spirit, together with the noblest and highest education, is the bringing up of the "Oxfords," to whom I have had such respect since I was quite a boy. Whenever I have met with those hatless young men in athletic costumes, or with square cap and gown, I always made my mental pictures on them. Is it this young man who some day will become M.P., or the Prime Minister of Great Britain?

I think Oxford women are very wise to dress themselves quite simply, and not follow after the Parisian style too much. I must confess that I like the Parisian women in Parisian style. But I think it is the speciality of the French women to dress up so neat and so chic, something like powter pigeons; their figures are made in that way. I have some English lady friends whose figures are quite French, and the latest Parisian fashion suits them splendidly. But they are the exception. Talking generally, it is not very nice when the English women are in French dress. It seems to me very ugly when they cut their figure into two by tightening their waist. The English women are at their best when they are in tea-gowns or in English overcoats. I saw this kind of woman more in Oxford. Perhaps they cannot be said to be *plus chic que les Parisiennes;* but there is some indescribable delight in their graceful refinement, avoiding all sorts of vulgarity.

I hear Oxford turns into a quite different town in the summer. Not only the trees get green, but smartest people in England cover the whole area of Thames water. I am thinking to witness this "change" as soon as I get a chance.

YOSHIO MARKINO.

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